

NOAA'S MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL  
MARINE SANCTUARY  
VISITOR CENTER SITE FEASIBILITY STUDY

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PHASE II REPORT  
JULY 2003

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**Appendices (Separate Cover; available on the web at:**

**[http: montereybay.noaa.gov/educate/visitorcenter.html](http://montereybay.noaa.gov/educate/visitorcenter.html))**

- ☐ Geotechnical and Geologic Research
- ☐ Toxic Hazards Research
- ☐ Cultural Resources Research

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# ***Introduction***

In March 2003, AMS Planning & Research completed Phase I of a Visitor Center Site Feasibility Study for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Phase I consisted of the following research components:

## **Phase I Scope of Work**

- ◆ Review of NOAA planning efforts, masterplans, interpretive plans and facility assessments and relevant municipal and county general and specific plans on issues such as urban redevelopment, preservation, tourism, and recreation, and other relevant plans being developed by educational, business and regional agencies.
- ◆ Interviews with a selection of key informants representing museums and attractions in area, the visitor industry, government agencies and others to generate information on community issues related to the proposed Visitor Center and solicit opinions of stakeholders related to issues and opportunities for the project.
- ◆ Investigation of 23 potential sites within the Monterey Bay region identified by key informants and Sanctuary staff.
- ◆ Research into potential partnerships through personal interviews with local, state and federal agencies, non profit organizations, foundations, and owners of proposed sites, including discussions of joint use, shared use, co-development, operating relationships, cross marketing, etc.
- ◆ A visitor intercept survey conducted at three potential locations for the Visitor Center in the Cities of Monterey and Santa Cruz and at Seacliff State Beach. Over 900 surveys were completed over a three-day period in August 2002.
- ◆ An analysis of market area demographics and lifestyle data.
- ◆ Investigation of potentially competitive facilities in the Monterey Bay area.
- ◆ An estimate of visitation to the proposed Visitor Center.
- ◆ Comparative studies of 11 relevant visitor and interpretive facilities in selected U.S. markets, including National Park Service Visitor Centers.

## Phase I Conclusions

### *Site Recommendations*

The Phase I report presented results of the various research components. After considering 23 prospective sites in the Monterey Bay area, the consultants recommended that four specific sites be studied in the second phase of the study. The four recommended sites are summarized below from the Phase I report:

- ◆ **City of Santa Cruz Fun Spot:** The site proposed by the City of Santa Cruz's planning department, redevelopment agency and City Council is known as the Fun Spot, located across Beach Street from the Municipal Wharf. The City owns the site. Representatives from the City indicated to AMS that the site would be made available at little or no cost. The City is currently planning to relocate its Museum of Natural History to the adjacent Depot Site and envisions close collaboration between the museum and the Sanctuary Visitor Center. It has been discussed that perhaps certain aspects of marketing, facility operations and programming could be shared between the Visitor Center and Museum and that visitors would be encouraged to visit between the two facilities.
  - Fun Spot site is approx. 15,000 square feet.
  - Site is bisected by active railroad tracks.
  - Building must not block views of historic railroad trestle and historic homes on hill behind site.
  - Free use of land, but no existing building.
  - 3.5 million visitors per year attend the nearby Beach Boardwalk and Municipal Wharf.
  - Heavy car and pedestrian traffic.
  - Ocean view is unobstructed and public beach access is approximately 50 yards away.
- ◆ **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk:** Within the same general vicinity as the Fun Spot is the world famous Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, which attracts approximately 3.5 million visitors annually. Representatives from the Seaside Company (owners of the Boardwalk) indicated they would be interested in discussing a partnership with MBNMS to utilize available space within the Boardwalk as a Visitor Center.
  - 6,500 square feet available for dedicated MBNMS space on upper floor of the arcade building.
  - Possible regular use of former Coconut Grove ballroom and other assembly spaces for programs.
  - Lease/partnership/sponsorship arrangement possible with Seaside Co.
  - Over 3 million people visit the Boardwalk annually.
  - Beachfront site allows the best possible ocean view and access to the resource.

- ◆ **Seacliff State Beach:** State Parks officials have proposed the three-acre area on the bluff-top at Seacliff State Beach as a potential site for the Visitor Center. The site currently contains a maintenance yard, paved parking area and an unpaved overflow parking area. California State Parks would provide the site at no cost and could become a partner in development and operations.
  - Approximately three acres
  - State Park is relocating maintenance yard to alternate location off-site.
  - Use of site offered at no cost by State Parks, but no existing building.
  - Visitation estimated to be in the range of one million per year.
  - Exceptional ocean view.
  - Easy beach access via auto drive or stairs down bluff-side.
- ◆ **Monterey Historic Train Depot:** The Depot building is located between Del Monte Avenue and Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey and is owned by the City. Historically, this building had a two-story addition, which, according to City planning officials, could be rebuilt if more space is required. The historic depot is not currently occupied and appears to be in reasonably good condition. The view of the Bay from this building is across a busy parking lot.
  - Existing building estimated to be approximately 3,600 square feet.
  - City officials would envision a \$1 per year lease arrangement pending further negotiation and City Council approval.
  - Annual visitation to the Monterey Cannery Row and Fisherman's Wharf area is estimated at approximately 4 million.
  - View to ocean is across large parking lot.
  - Beach access is across the parking lot.

### *Visitation Estimates*

AMS consultants provided an analysis of visitation to the various locations under consideration utilizing available visitation estimates from City, County and State sources. The consultants also analyzed visitation estimates from existing National Park visitor centers and other comparable facilities to assist with forecasting the number of visitors to a new Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center.

Based on the data collected, it is AMS's conclusion that, due to the strong interest level and favorable demographics in the region, the MBNMS Visitor Center would likely attract approximately 10% or more of the existing visitors to each of the three general locations (Santa Cruz, Seacliff and Monterey).

Visitor data assembled by the consultants reflects best estimates by the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, the Monterey Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Monterey Bay Aquarium and State Park officials. Since the release of the Phase I report, questions have arisen regarding the sources of the estimates of overall visitation to the three general locations and the equitability of the comparison between areas. In an attempt to clarify the visitation numbers, the consultants

offer the following explanations. It should be noted that, admittedly, our methodology is not perfect. The scope and budget for this planning process did not include conducting visitation counts. The only way to truly compare “apples to apples” would be to conduct an extensive visitor counting study in each of the locations simultaneously over the course of one or more years.

Our estimates rely on existing data from multiple sources, collected using varying methods. From this research, we conclude that visitation to Monterey is higher than the other locations. We find that the Santa Cruz beach area (including the Wharf and Boardwalk) receives the second highest visitation and that Seacliff receives the lowest level of visitation of the three locations under consideration.

### ***Santa Cruz Beach Area Visitation Estimate***

AMS consulted with the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk staff and the Santa Cruz County Conference and Visitors Council to establish the 3.5 million visitor estimate used in the report. This number reflects the Boardwalks estimate of visitors to the Beach Boardwalk amusement park. This estimate is based on the number of tickets sold, annual visitor surveys and other sales figures. The Conference and Visitors Council uses this same number as a “best guess” for visitors to the Santa Cruz area, though the figure represents visitation to one specific attraction. It was reported that in 1992 Economic Research Associates (ERA) completed a study that found over seven million “visitor days” occurred per year at the Santa Cruz “beach area.” Based on these findings, the consultants believe that the 3.5 million visitor estimate is a reasonable estimate of the number of people visiting the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and Municipal Wharf area (which includes the Santa Cruz Fun Spot) each year.

### ***Monterey Visitation Estimate***

The Monterey annual visitation estimate used in the Phase I report is approximately 4 million. This number has been the “going estimate” for a number of years and is based on visitation figures used by the Monterey Bay Aquarium (MBA) and the results of a visitor survey conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide in 1999. This survey established that nearly 50% of Monterey visitors attend the MBA. The visitor intercept survey administered by AMS during Phase I found similar results (48%). The MBA serves approximately 2 million visitors per year, therefore, it is deduced that 4 million people visit the Cannery Row/Fisherman’s Wharf/Aquarium area each year, which is where the Historic Train Depot is located.

### ***Seacliff State Beach Visitation Estimate***

For Seacliff, the number of paid admissions to the State Beach (including campsite users) is approximately one million according to State Park authorities. This figure is based on the number of vehicle admission receipts multiplied by 2.2, which is a common multiplier used by most State Parks in California. State Park officials estimate that actual visitation is significantly higher due to a number of access points where visitors do not pass through an admission gate.

However, no visitor count has ever been conducted at the site or in the Aptos/Seacliff Village area and the methodology of the State Park's "walk-on" visitation estimate is not clear. The consultants have elected to use a one million visitor estimate for the purposes of this study, as it is the only "defensible" visitor count for the location.

While this number is somewhat less than the visitation numbers from the other locations, it is still a substantial number of visitors and could provide the MBNMS with a significant audience for the proposed Visitor Center. The consultants also wish to emphasize the fact that Seacliff State Beach is located in a relatively isolated site when compared to the urban sites in Santa Cruz and Monterey. The urban sites capitalize on the number of attractions located within a dense area and the "traffic" created by this phenomenon. A Visitor Center at Seacliff, absent this urban effect, would rely on State Beach visitors only. Whereas, the Santa Cruz and Monterey sites benefit by the numerous attractions located within close proximity to the proposed Visitor Center sites (i.e. the Beach Boardwalk, Municipal Wharf, Cannery Row, Fisherman's Wharf and numerous shops and restaurants within walking distance).

### ***Other Findings and Recommendations***

During Phase I the consultants also administered a visitor intercept survey of over 900 respondents from locations in Monterey, Seacliff State Beach and the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf and beach area. Findings include:

- ◆ High level of interest in a MBNMS Visitor Center that serves as an "educational resource"
- ◆ "Hands-on" activities were rated high by parents with children living in the home

The survey pointed out differences between visitors to each location. These differences do not necessarily imply that one site is "better" than the others. The data suggest that the programs and activities of a Visitor Center would need to be different in each location, responding to factors such as the presence of children, potential visitation numbers, the knowledge that the visitors bring with them and the familiarity of the visitors with the area.

The major differences in the locations can be summarized as follows:

- ◆ Visitors to Seacliff State Beach comprised a significantly higher percentage of local residents (Monterey Bay area) than the other two locations
  - 30% of Seacliff survey respondents from Monterey Bay region
  - 17% of Monterey and Santa Cruz respondents from Monterey Bay region
- ◆ Monterey visitors stay in the area for longer periods of time than Santa Cruz and Seacliff visitors and plan their trips further in advance
  - 54% of Monterey respondents on short "get-away" or longer trip.
  - 30% or less on "get-away" or longer trip at Seacliff and Santa Cruz.



- ◆ The Santa Cruz County locations draw higher numbers of families with children
  - 55% of survey respondents in Santa Cruz and Seacliff indicated presence of children in household.
  - 32% of survey respondents in Monterey indicated presence of children in household.
- ◆ Repeat visitation is high at all three survey locations, but more so at the two Santa Cruz County locations.

## Phase II Scope of Work

In Phase II, AMS consultants partnered with experts in various fields associated with assessing the physical characteristics of each potential site. Specifically, the Phase II scope of work encompassed:

- ◆ Phase II scope of work
  - Geologic and geotechnical assessments of potential sites.
  - Evaluation of environmental, land use and infrastructure issues and constraints.
  - Cultural resources assessments.
  - Facility requirements.
  - Site compatibility evaluation.
  - Evaluation of permit requirements.
  - Project cost estimate.
  - A preliminary facility operating estimate including recommended staffing requirements and a base year budget for expenses and revenues.
  - An assessment of community and economic impact.

The remainder of this document contains the results of the Phase II research. A summary of the technical evaluation and ranking of the four sites under consideration begins on page 50.

# *Facility Program & Space Allocation*

Establishing project goals and determining the nature of the visitor experience are critical aspects of any feasibility study. This information sets guidelines for the intent of the project. Following this, space allocation for the proposed facility is developed. Total square footage, although preliminary at this stage, is useful to test the sites and their ability to accommodate the facility program.

The consulting team worked with MBNMS staff to establish goals and objectives for the proposed Visitor Center. National and regional studies regarding Sanctuary interpretation, educational priorities and facility development were also consulted.

Fletcher Farr Ayotte Architects and AMS consultants held a “vision and goals” workshop with Sanctuary staff to begin defining what the Visitor Center should be and the objectives it needs to serve. Following this workshop, a preliminary space allocation program was developed to assist with the site evaluations. It should be noted that the consulting team did not prepare a detailed interpretive program for the Center, which will be an essential next step in the planning process.

The “Visitor Center Goals” and the “Visitor Experience” sections that follow highlight the great potential this project has to bring the wonders of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary into public view and promote stewardship of the ocean to a broad audience. These factors established the basis and priorities for the preliminary facility program set forth in this section.

## **Visitor Center Goals**

### *The Visitor Center should:*

- ◆ Be an interactive interpretive center
  - A facility with hands-on exhibits and interactive displays
  - Use technology to transport visitors into the depths of the Sanctuary
  - Develop a physical relationship with the Sanctuary to engage and educate the visitor beyond the exhibits

- Address the visitor's knowledge base, translate science into visitor's language
- ◆ Highlight natural and cultural resources
  - Tell stories of diverse habitats, ocean systems, productivity and harvesting, and ecosystem interaction
  - Tell stories of the relationship between geology and biology
  - Tell stories of people's use of the Sanctuary: past and present, shipwrecks, explorers, settlers and the impact of community growth
  - Recognize historic roles of Native Americans, European influences and others
  - Recognize current local commercial industries, pleasure and research
- ◆ Highlight role of citizen stewardship in marine protection
  - Provide ideas and the tools to inspire connection to resource
  - Encourage behavioral changes to individuals, communities and government
- ◆ Build awareness of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary System
  - Inform visitors of the other Sanctuaries in California and in other states
  - Inspire and encourage people to visit other Sanctuaries
- ◆ Build awareness of other NOAA programs
  - Make a connection to other relevant programs such as weather or fisheries
  - Provide name recognition for NOAA

## The Visitor Experience

### *The Visitor Experience should include:*

- ◆ Natural resources
  - Canyon, kelp forest, upwelling, habitats, wildlife, coastline beauty
  - Invertebrates, land/sea interface, watershed uses, sounds of the sea
- ◆ Cultural resources
  - Human users (recreation, research, fishing)
  - Maritime heritage (shipwrecks, explorers, settlers)
- ◆ Engaging the resource
  - Outside activities, self-guided or docent-lead tours and experiences, connection with Sanctuary Scenic Trail and referrals to other places and activities.
  - Meeting space for community events, gifts for purchase, ideas for sanctuary stewardship
- ◆ A different experience than other local venues
  - Integrated green building technology.

- Tele-presence technology that allows virtual experiences of other Marine Sanctuaries.
- Highlight the connection between people and the ocean.
- Feature entire Sanctuary and National Sanctuaries, highlight environmental success stories

### **Preliminary Space Allocation**

The space allocation summarized on the following page responds to input received from Sanctuary staff, NOAA criteria for facility planning and the consulting team's experience in programming and designing similar facilities for the National Park Service and other federal and state natural resource agencies and private non-profit organizations. Preliminary square footages are listed for anticipated uses in the facility, as are relevant features for each space.

Given the vast array of potential stories to tell, the extent of interpretive space is not fully known at this time. Depending on the outcome of a detailed interpretive planning process, final program determinations and available funding, the square footage for interpretive exhibits could change significantly.

Name	Square Ft.	Features	Remarks
Entry/Lobby/Reception	1,000	Welcome desk, wayfinding	Includes preview exhibits
Interpretive Exhibits	2,650	General 2,000 Theater 650	The WOW factor
Training/Classroom/Public Meeting Room	2,000	2,000/12sq. ft = 166 people	Rentable space, near staging, should include AV/chair storage. Size could be reduced to increase exhibit area if desired.
Bookstore	300		Off lobby
Public Resource Library	200		Off lobby, near staff area. Could add this square footage to exhibit area if desired.
Staff Area	1,400	Staff - 6@ 100 Conf. 200 Copy 60 Equipment 80 Storage 400 Restroom 60	
Break Room/Volunteer Lounge	350	Break room 200 Volunteer lounge 150	
Restrooms	600	300 Each	
Mechanical/Electrical	400	Mechanical 300 Electrical 100	
<b>NET SQUARE FOOTAGE</b>	<b>8,900</b>		
Misc. Circulation @ .35	3,100		
<b>GROSS SQUARE FOOTAGE</b>	<b>12,000</b>		

Figure 1: Estimated Square Footage

## Capital Cost Estimate

To achieve an order of magnitude for direct construction costs, improvements are addressed on a cost per square foot basis, except as noted:

◆ New Building Construction	\$200-\$300/SF
◆ Remodel Existing Structure	\$200/SF
◆ Exhibits	\$350-\$500/SF
◆ Site Improvements (Non-parking)	\$75/SF
◆ Site Development for Remote Sites	3% of Building and Site Costs

These figures represent *first costs only*, not operational costs over the life of the building. The historic buildings being considered may have inherent operating costs due to their age, such as energy consumption or repairs. New buildings may have higher initial costs, but can have sustainable features built in, to decrease energy costs and be less of a burden on the local utility systems. The cost figures utilized represent the consulting team's experience with construction projects on the West Coast and in the Monterey Bay area.

Where a range of cost per square foot is shown, the higher number is used as a conservative calculation of anticipated costs. Professional and design fees, additional owner's costs such as legal fees, permits, site-specific testing and construction administration are not included (refer to the technical appendices for cost estimates of recommended site-specific testing). These additional fees and costs will most likely add 25% to the cost estimates. Some cost components remain unknown, such as mitigation of environmental hazards or utility systems installation. Parking spaces exist on each of the sites in varying quantities. Costs associated with adding parking spaces is not shown in any of the comparisons.

**Monterey Depot Cost Estimate**

Remodeling of Existing Building	3600SF @ \$200/SF	\$720,000
Addition to complete Program	8400SF @ \$300/SF	\$2,520,000
Exhibits	3000SF @ \$500/SF	\$1,500,000
Site Improvements*	18,000SF @ \$75/SF	\$1,350,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$6,090,000</b>

\*Site Improvements include landscaping and walkways adjacent to and surrounding the building and parking lot.

**Seacliff Cost Estimate**

New Building	12,000SF @ \$300/SF	\$3,600,000
Exhibits	3000SF @ \$500/SF	\$1,500,000
Site Improvements*	6500SF @ \$75/SF	\$487,500
Increase for Remote Location	.03 x \$5,587,500	\$167,625
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$5,755,125</b>

\*Site Improvements are limited to a 10-foot area around the building perimeter

**Fun Spot Cost Estimate**

New Building	12,000SF @ \$300/SF	\$3,600,000
Exhibits	3000SF @ \$500/SF	\$1,500,000
Site Improvements*	8000SF @ \$75/SF	\$600,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$5,700,000</b>

\*Site Improvements are limited to landscaping and walkways adjacent to and surrounding the building and parking lot.

**Beach Boardwalk Cost  
Estimate**

Remodel Existing Space	6500SF @ \$200/SF	\$1,300,000
Exhibits	3000SF @ \$500/SF	\$1,500,000
Site Improvements*	Not Applicable	
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2,800,000**</b>

\*No Site Improvements are included, although signage and other identification on the existing building is an associated cost.

\*\*Although the cost of this site is approximately half of the others, only half of the Facility Program is accommodated.



## Site Evaluations

This section describes and evaluates each of the four sites under consideration. Additional descriptions of these sites can be found in the Phase I report issued in March 2003 and included as an appendix to this document. A summary of the evaluation begins on page 50. The reader may wish to refer to the appendices documents for definitions of technical terms, review of research documents utilized and details regarding potential hazards, constraints, mitigations and costs.

### City of Monterey Depot Site

The Monterey site is at the hinge point between an established and popular wharf area and a newer city park development (“Window on the Bay”). Improvements in the historic Passenger Depot area would complete the system of public and private amenities along the Monterey waterfront. Specific features include:

- ◆ The site has excellent visibility from Del Monte Avenue and easy access off this main arterial. It is adjacent to an existing pedestrian and bike trail.
- ◆ It is within walking distance to other amenities such as the Municipal Wharf, State Historic Park and Downtown Monterey.
- ◆ The ocean is not visible from the site. However, there is potential for an oblique view across the parking lot from the creation of a second story.
- ◆ The historic train depot, one of two remaining historic railroad structures, does not necessarily represent the Marine Sanctuary as a building type.
- ◆ Since the existing building is only 3,600 square feet (about a third of the estimated facility program square footage), an addition is required.

### Summary of Constraints and Issues

- ◆ **Land Use:** Visitor Center use is permitted under existing and proposed land use and zoning designations.
- ◆ **Resources/Environmental Issues:** Passenger Depot and Freight Depot buildings are considered historic resources, which would require further review and Section 106 consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and may affect future building modifications. Additional archaeological review or monitoring may be needed.

- ◆ **Hazards / Site Constraints:** There is potential for liquefaction, lateral spreading and settlement; potential for contaminated soils due to historic on-site and adjacent uses. Further geologic and geotechnical review will be required, including a Phase II environmental assessment.
- ◆ **Access & Parking:** Good vehicular, transit, bicycle and pedestrian access exists. Parking is available on-site and in the immediate area. Development would be required to pay fair-share contribution to cost of intersection improvements.
- ◆ **Services:** Project water demand cannot be fully met as the City does not have remaining water allocation to serve the project and only one-half of the estimated water demand may be available with water credits for the site. There are no other known infrastructure/capacity issues or constraints that would require major upgrades to water, sewer or storm drain lines.
- ◆ **Community Support:** Community support and/or opposition are not known.
- ◆ **Regulatory Requirements:** Approval for use of site by MBNMS is required from Monterey City Council; use permit approval required from City Planning Commission; and approval of coastal development permit required from either the California Coastal Commission or City with appropriate California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review, likely an Initial Study/Negative Declaration. Appropriate federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is required, which could be a Categorical Exclusion or an Environmental Assessment.

### *Existing Site Conditions*

- ◆ Approximately 1.6 acres; City-owned property (APN 001-701-011). (see Figure 2)
- ◆ Existing development includes the former Southern Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot building (approximately 3,600 square feet) with parking for the building (approximately 30 spaces) and an existing public parking lot (approximately 130 spaces). The building was formerly used for commercial purposes (retail fisherman's supply store) until 2001, and is now used by the City's junior lifeguard program for storage and training.
- ◆ The site is flat and mostly paved; two large cypress trees are adjacent to the site on the west.
- ◆ The site is located adjacent to the existing recreational trail and is in proximity to Wharf No. 2, the Maritime Museum, Fisherman's Wharf, and several commercial recreational operations.

### *Design Concept*

- ◆ Approximately 7,000 - 9,000 square feet of space added to existing 3,600 square foot structure required to meet facility program requirement of 12,000 square feet.
- ◆ Building designs considered include second story addition to existing Passenger Depot Building or relocation of Freight Building to Passenger Depot site with use of both buildings. (See Figure 3) The building(s) would

be modified to accommodate the Visitor Center, although the extent of such modifications (structural and/or design) are not yet known.

- ◆ Annual visitation estimated at 416,000 to the Visitor Center

### ***Land Use Considerations***

- ◆ **General Plan Designation / Zoning:** Site is zoned as Commercial / C-2. *A Visitor Center is permitted within these designations (considered “Cultural Institution” use).*
- ◆ **Monterey Harbor Local Coastal Program (LCP) Land Use Plan:** Site is designated Marine Commercial (Harbor Land Use Plan), although California Coastal Commission certification recommends modification to the City’s LCP to designate the site as “Catellus Multi-use,” per the proposed improvement plan (see discussion below). Allowable uses include parking, coastal dependent, coastal related, and public serving uses with specific uses limited to those uses supporting and serving the marina, Wharf No. 2, and Monterey Beach with parking to be provided on-site or in the marina area. *A Visitor Center would be consistent with this proposed designation.*

The project site is located within the Harbor area Land Use Plan (LUP) of the Local Coastal Program (LCP). The LUP was recently certified by the California Coastal Commission with modifications, which were accepted by the Monterey City Council in June 2003. Final submission of the revised plan and Implementation Plan will result in a certified LCP for the area. Until the City of Monterey has a complete certified LCP, which may take 1-2 years, the Coastal Commission is the authority that will review and approve coastal development permits in the area.

- ◆ **Catellus Properties Phased Improvement Plan:** This plan includes the project site and several adjoining properties and has been prepared for the City of Monterey. It identifies a series of improvements for the 7-acre property with the overall objectives to improve public access to Monterey Bay Beach and Wharf II; improve the aesthetics and views of the project area from Del Monte Avenue; and improve circulation and parking at the project site. Improvements include amending the zoning of the west parcel (Passenger Depot site) from Community Commercial (C-2) to Open Space District; applying a zoning overlay of Historic Landmark (H-1) to the Southern Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot building; and restoring the Passenger Depot building. *A Visitor Center is permitted within the proposed Open Space district (considered “Cultural Institution” use).*

The Catellus Properties Improvement Plan Final EIR recommends retaining the Freight building in its current location, although it considers relocation to the Passenger Depot site. The Improvement Plan also calls for relocation of the existing Recreational Trail closer to the water and further away from the Passenger Depot building; installation of a turnaround at the entrance to Wharf No. 2 adjacent to the Depot site; public parking lot improvements; and construction of a permanent wave run-up barrier adjacent to the pedestrian plaza to the northeast of the Passenger Depot site.

- ◆ **Relevant Use / Siting Policies:**

- **Height Limits:** 25 feet per Harbor LCP.
- **Parking:** Provide required parking on-site.
- **Geotechnical:** Site-specific geotechnical studies required per Harbor LCP, especially for seismic, liquefaction, lateral spreading, and storm wave run-up constraints. No development is permitted in tsunami or storm wave inundation areas per Harbor LCP.
- ◆ **Compatibility with Adjacent Uses:** Surrounding uses consist of a variety of visitor-serving and coastal recreational uses. Nearby uses include Wharf No. 2, the Maritime Museum, and the adjacent coastal Monterey Bay Recreation Trail (providing pedestrian/bicycle access). *A Visitor Center at this location would be compatible with the nearby uses.*

### ***Resources / Environmental Issues***

- ◆ **Cultural Resources:** The Passenger Depot building has been evaluated as meeting the criteria for listing in both the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), although it does not appear that the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) has formally concurred in the evaluation. The depot building is also recognized to be historic by the City of Monterey. A Section 106 historic evaluation would be needed and reviewed by SHPO to determine whether they concur with NRHP eligibility. NOAA would then need to assess the potential effects of the remodeling of the depot building to suit the needs of the Visitor Center, seek SHPO comment on potential effects of any alterations that could affect historically significant attributes of the building, and propose to resolve any adverse effects to the historic depot. If SHPO does not concur that the property is eligible for NRHP listing, historic review, including effects of building alterations, would still need to be evaluated under CEQA. These additional reviews may add considerably to the development timeline and budget. The historic nature of the building is likely to constrain the architecture and engineering of a Visitor Center at this location.
  - No previously documented archaeological resources are known on the site. An archaeological reconnaissance of the area around the depot building found no evidence of archaeological remains on the depot property itself, although what appears to be prehistoric archaeological remains (midden) were observed on an adjacent parcel just northwest of the depot building. This suggests the potential to encounter archaeological deposits in the immediate vicinity of the depot building during any excavations made for developments associated with the Visitor Center. Further subsurface investigations and/or archaeological monitoring during construction would be needed.
- ◆ **Public Views / Design:** The site is located along Del Monte Boulevard. Public views of Monterey Bay are primarily limited to viewing points on the beach due to presence of structures and sand dunes which block views of the bay from the street. Along the Depot site frontage, there are no views of the bay. The Harbor LCP identifies a future view corridor to the bay from the

intersection of Figueroa and Del Monte in a northeast direction, which is opposite of the Depot site, but there are no mapped or existing views of the bay across the Passenger Depot site. A Visitor Center located at the Depot would not impair public view corridors.

### ***Hazards / Site Constraints***

- ◆ **Geologic / Geotechnical Hazards:** The site is located in an area of high seismic activity and will likely be subject to strong seismic shaking in the future. The site is potentially underlain at shallow depths by some or all of the following: soils contaminated with hazardous substances; liquefiable sand; compressible silt, clay, and peat; non-engineered fill; and bedrock. Potential hazards due to the presence of these earth materials include liquefaction, lateral spreading, earthquake-induced settlement and static settlement. The lateral spreading hazard is dependent on the design and construction of the seawall east of the property that is planned as part of the Catellus Properties Improvement Plan. Groundwater under the site will likely be shallow, salt-bearing and tidally-influenced, creating potentially corrosive foundation conditions. These potential hazards will require further studies prior to construction at this site to determine the degree, type and cost of mitigations.

There is significant potential for subsurface soil/water contamination that will require further review, particularly if there will be foundation upgrades and/or earth work. Database records indicate that the site has no record of chemical spills, releases or generation of hazardous waste, however there are a number of documented off-site environmental cases that have the potential to impact the subject site. Historic land use maps show all lands immediately up-gradient and side-gradient of the subject property contained long-term bulk chemical storage and use (gas stations, gasification plant). Due to the long-term commercial-industrial land use history of the area, including the subject site, and documentation of a nearby fuel release site, completion of a Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessment, a geophysical survey for underground storage tanks, and an asbestos and lead survey for the existing structure are recommended. Should elevated levels of chemicals be detected a Health-Based Risk Assessment may also need to be completed. (See appendices for definitions of technical terms and the Geologic/Geotechnical appendix and Toxic Hazards appendix for additional information.)

- ◆ **Flood Hazards / Wave Run-up:** Flooding potential due to storm-wave run-up is low to moderate.

### ***Access / Parking***

- ◆ **Access / Traffic:** Good vehicular, transit, shuttle, bicycle and pedestrian access to the site currently exists. Del Monte Avenue, a 4-lane east/west arterial street, provides access to the site with an existing entrance provided to the site. The street is a 6-lane divided street between Camino El Estero and Washington Street. Del Monte Avenue is planned for widening between Camino El Estero and Sloat Avenue to include addition of a third eastbound lane, left-turn lanes at intersections, and signal improvements. The project is under design, but there is no timeframe for implementation. A roundabout is

proposed for the current site entrance at Figueroa Street to move traffic more efficiently in this area.

- Two vicinity intersections currently operate at unacceptable levels: Del Monte/Figueroa and Del Monte/Washington. Although the proposed Visitor Center is expected to draw primarily from existing visitors in the vicinity, rather than being a new attraction generating additional trips, some additional traffic would be expected, including staff, deliveries and bus trips, although project traffic is expected to be less than a commercial use that previously occupied the site<sup>1</sup>. *As part of use permit approval, development likely would be required to pay a fair-share contribution to improvements to these intersections. A traffic study would be required to determine project trips and fair-share contribution.*
- ◆ **Parking:** During the peak summer months and on weekends during the rest of the year, parking facilities in the area are heavily used. There are approximately 30 existing spaces at the Passenger Depot building site. The Catellus Properties Improvement Plan would provide 136 parking spaces on the Depot building site. The entire plan includes 859 spaces on the east, west and waterfront sites, resulting in a net increase in 138 public spaces over the existing 721 existing public spaces in the improvement plan area. Although the proposed Visitor Center is expected to draw primarily from existing visitors in the vicinity, some project parking demand would be expected. Under City regulations, approximately 27 parking spaces would be required for the facility, which could be accommodated on-site. *Project parking demand could be met on-site.*

### ***Services / Infrastructure***

- ◆ **Water Availability:** Water demand at the Depot site is estimated at approximately 0.56 acre-feet per year (AFY) based on estimated building square footage and water demand rates used by the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD). Monterey Peninsula communities are subject to a water allocation, administered through the MPWMD. As of July 1, 2003, the City of Monterey had no remaining unused water allocation. A waiting list for water connections is administered by the City, but there are no indications of when a new or supplemental water source may be available. *The City of Monterey does not have remaining water allocation to serve the project.*

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<sup>1</sup> For example, a Visitor Center may generate approximately 50 weekday peak hour trips and approximately 80 weekend peak hour trips based on estimated peak day visitation levels (with an assumption that weekdays will generate less traffic than weekends); estimated employee, delivery, and group bus trips; and assumptions that at least 10% of daily visitor trips will be attracted to the site and 20% of the daily trips will be generated in the peak hour.

- Water credits can be used for transfer between uses on the same site, where there has been historical uses on the site. Water credits would be available based on the existing building square footage and the MPWMD water use rates in amount of approximately 0.25 AFY, which would provide approximately half of the estimated project water demand. *Project water demand cannot be fully supplied by water use credits available on the site as administered through the MPWMD.*
- The Monterey Peninsula is served by the California-American Water Company (Cal-Am), and water availability is extremely limited since the State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 95-10 was imposed in 1995. This Order requires Cal-Am to reduce the water it pumps from the Carmel River by 20% and up to 75% in the future. Additionally, any new water that is developed must first completely offset Cal-Am's unlawful diversions from the Carmel River, an estimated 10,730 acre-feet (AF) per year, before any water produced by Cal-Am can be used for new construction or expansions in use. The MPWMD is in the process of evaluating water supply options, including a desalination plant. The California Coastal Commission suggested modifications to the City's Harbor LCP does include a new water resource policy that would permit public desalination facilities provided any adverse impacts are fully mitigated.
- ◆ **Wastewater / Infrastructure:** There are no other known infrastructure/capacity issues or constraints that would require major upgrades to water, sewer or storm drain lines.

### ***Regulatory Requirements***

- ◆ City Council approval of visitor-serving tenant for the building is required. The City may decide to go through competitive RFP selection process to identify other suitable tenants if a public visitor-serving use is agreed upon.
- ◆ **Permits:** Use permit approval required from City Planning Commission. Coastal permit approval required; would go before California Coastal Commission unless City of Monterey gets a certified LCP first. It may take 1-2 years for the City to obtain a LCP.
- ◆ **Environmental Review:** CEQA environmental review required due to ownership of land by City, which is subject to local permits. Project could potentially use the certified Catellus Improvement Plan EIR and/or prepare an Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND). Potential issues for review include cultural resources, geotechnical, traffic, parking, and water supply.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is required as is a National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 review and consultation with SHPO regarding historic building status and effects of alterations. Construction at this site may be eligible for a Categorical Exclusion under NEPA, and if not, an Environmental Assessment likely would be required.

***Community Support /  
Concerns***

- ◆ City Council has taken a position supporting the MBNMS's study of the site, and is waiting for more details to come forward before taking any further action.
- ◆ Area tourist industry representative interviewed during Phase I expressed strong support for the project as did City staff members.
- ◆ Some community concerns expressed that Monterey has too many visitor-serving attractions in the Cannery Row/Fisherman's Wharf area. Residents cite increases in traffic as a major concern.
- ◆ City staff suggests consideration of collaborative ventures with nearby, recently constructed Maritime Museum and commercial businesses (Maritime Adventures, Monterey Bay Kayaks) if the Depot is selected for development by the MBNMS.
- ◆ Details regarding community support and concerns are discussed in greater depth in the Phase I report.

***Additional Studies Needed***

- ◆ Geologic and geotechnical studies
- ◆ Phase II environmental site assessment (potential) to further evaluate the presence of soil contamination and asbestos/lead survey for the existing building is recommended
- ◆ Traffic Study
- ◆ Archaeological review and/or monitoring during construction



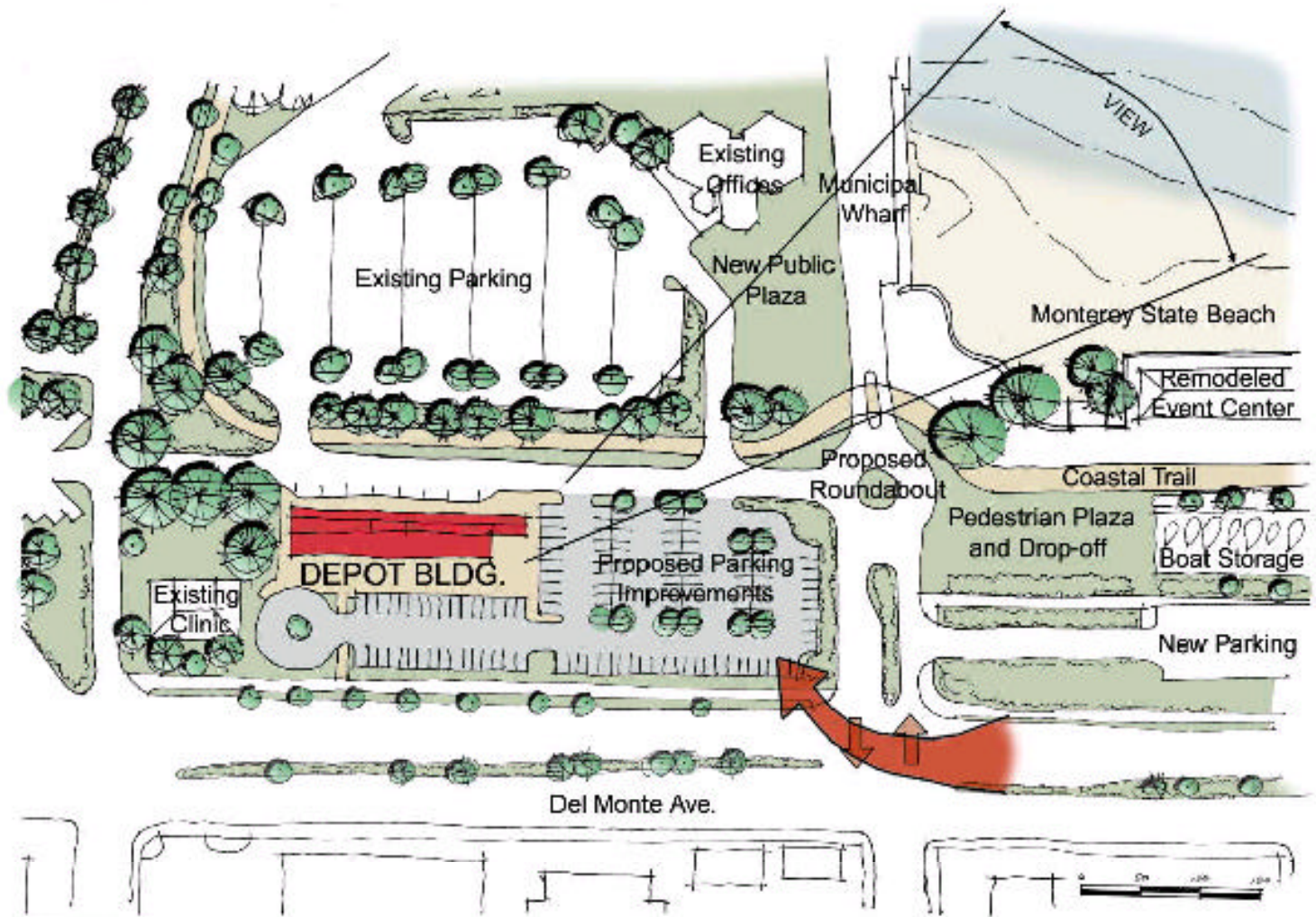


Figure 2: Monterey Depot Site  
Existing Conditions

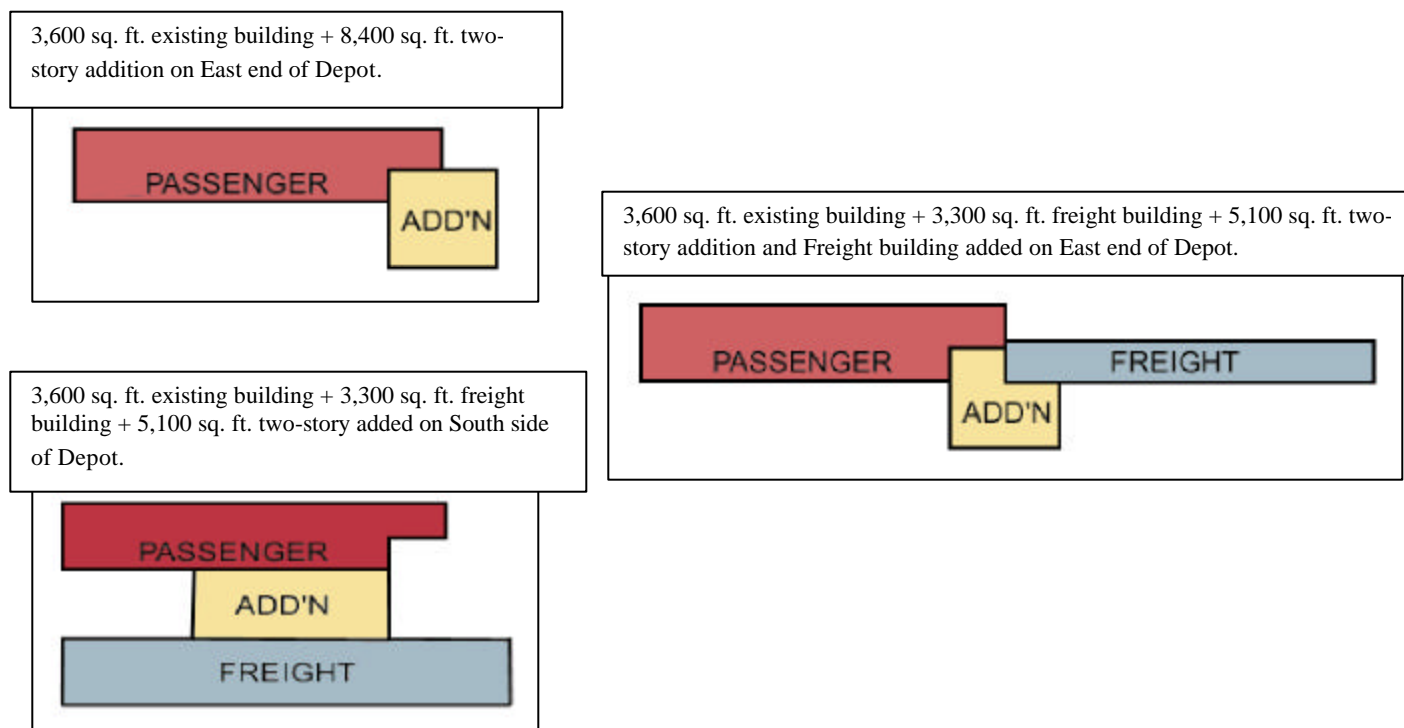


Figure 3: Three Monterey Depot Site Configuration Options

## City of Santa Cruz Fun Spot Site

The Fun Spot site, currently a temporary skate park, could act as a gateway component to the Santa Cruz Depot Site. At an intersection opposite the Municipal Wharf, it is backed by a small bluff and framed by an historic trestle bridge (see Figure 4). Specific features include:

- ◆ The site is obscured by the bluff from a southward approach, but opens up at the intersection of Pacific Avenue and Beach Street. Sidewalks on Pacific are narrow against the bluff and site. The site is highly visible from the Beach Boardwalk approach.
- ◆ An active rail line bisects the site, forming two distinct parcels.
- ◆ A clear view of the ocean and wharf would only be possible from an upper story.
- ◆ The Facility Program can be accommodated on the larger, 15,000 square foot portion of the property. A two-story building would be necessary to allow for ocean views and suitable setbacks from the street, rail line and trestle bridge. (See Figure 5 for configuration options.)
- ◆ Parking can be achieved by using the smaller portion of the site, but improvements to the sidewalk are necessary to assist pedestrian traffic between the parcels and around the site.
- ◆ A structure greater than one story could have a negative impact on views from the motel on the bluff.

## Summary of Constraints and Issues

- ◆ **Land Use:** Visitor Center use is permitted under existing land use and zoning designations. MBNMS Visitor Center use is specifically identified for location in the Wharf area in City plans. Relocation of the existing skateboard park will be undertaken by City.
- ◆ **Resources/Environmental Issues:** Concerns include protection of public views from West Cliff Drive Bridge, potential indirect impacts to adjacent cultural resource (West Cliff Bridge). Additional archaeological review or monitoring may be needed.
- ◆ **Hazards / Site Constraints:** Small, irregularly shaped parcel that is bisected by railroad tracks limits site layout design options. Potential for liquefaction/geotechnical hazards that will require further study.
- ◆ **Access & Parking:** Good vehicular, transit, bicycle, pedestrian and visitor rail access exists. On-site Traffic congestion exists during summer and peak weekend periods. Payment of fair-share contribution to cumulative Beach area intersection and traffic improvements may be required. Parking is available on-site and in immediate area.

- ◆ **Services:** There are no known constraints except potential citywide water shortages during a drought. There are no other known infrastructure/capacity issues that would require major upgrades to water, sewer or storm drain lines.
- ◆ **Community Support:** Strong City and UCSC support for Visitor Center.
- ◆ **Regulatory Requirements:** Requires approval of coastal development and design permits from the City of Santa Cruz with appropriate CEQA review, likely an Initial Study/Negative Declaration. Appropriate federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is required, which likely would be an Environmental Assessment or possibly a Categorical Exclusion.

#### *Existing Site Conditions*

- ◆ 0.70 acres; City-owned property (APN 004-091-25, 2, 3, 6).
- ◆ Existing development includes a skateboard park and public parking lot (approximately 20 existing spaces).
- ◆ The site is flat, mostly paved, and bisected by railroad tracks. Location for Visitor Center is approximately 15,000 square feet (gross).
- ◆ The site is located in the City's primary visitor destination, in proximity to the Municipal Wharf and Boardwalk.

#### *Design Concept*

- ◆ Approximate 12,000 square foot facility.
- ◆ Facility configurations considered include a two-story building on the northern portion of the site. (See Figure 5.)
- ◆ Annual Visitor Center visitation estimated at 366,000

#### *Land Use Considerations*

- ◆ **General Plan / LCP Designation:** Parks. *A Visitor Center is permitted within this designation.*
- ◆ **Zoning:** Parks (PK). Public parks and recreational facilities and government and public facilities are permitted in the PK district with approval of a special use permit and design permit, unless exempted by state or federal law. The purpose of the PK district is to ensure that there is a compatible relationship between such parks and the surrounding area. *A Visitor Center is permitted within this designation.*
- ◆ **Beach and South of Laurel Comprehensive Area Plan (B/SOL Plan):** The Beach and South of Laurel Comprehensive Area Plan (B/SOL Plan) was adopted by the City Council in October 1998. It provides the governing land use, circulation and design policies for this planning area, in which the Fun Spot site is located. It was certified in 2002 by the California Coastal Commission as part of the City's certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) for the Beach area. The Plan supports a 3,000-4,000 square foot Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center on the Wharf, and such development was accounted for in the B/SOL Plan EIR analyses. The B/SOL did not specifically address a Visitor Center at the Fun Spot.

- ◆ **Depot Site Master Plan:** This site master plan was approved by the City Council in 2002 and encompasses approximately 8.5 acres, including the Fun Spot site. The master plan includes open space, public, and transportation-related improvements, including a Natural History Museum and park. Construction of the first phase (park and some improvements) is scheduled to begin this year. The Master Plan designates the Fun Spot as part of a landscaped site entry with bicycle racks, benches, and displays. The site was also reviewed for use as a permanent skateboard park per directives from the City Council.
- ◆ **Relevant Use / Siting Policies:**
  - **Height Limits:** 50 feet per City General Plan / LCP.
- ◆ **Compatibility with Adjacent Uses:** Surrounding uses consist of a variety of visitor-serving and coastal recreational uses. Nearby uses include the Municipal Wharf, the Boardwalk, and recreational trails, including West Cliff Drive. A Natural History Museum is planned for the Depot site. *A Visitor Center at this location would be compatible with the nearby uses.*
  - Development of a Visitor Center on this site would require relocation of the existing skateboard park. City staff have indicated that the City supports the Visitor Center on this site and would work to identify an appropriate relocation site. Relocation of the skateboard park is not expected to result in any schedule or cost delays for the Visitor Center if this site is selected.

### ***Resources / Environmental Issues***

- ◆ **Public Views / Design:** The building should be sited and designed to prevent obstruction of public views of the ocean from the bike/pedestrian path on the West Cliff Drive trestle bridge, although there are no formally designated public view corridors from this location identified in City plans. (See Figure 6 and Figure 7 for views of the site from West Cliff Drive and the trestle bridge.) A structure at this site could also impact private views from the existing motel on West Cliff Drive. According to City staff, a new structure may not need to be in strict adherence to B/SOL Plan Design Guidelines, which call for continuing “a Victorian character in new development along Pacific Avenue.”
- ◆ **Cultural Resources:** The West Cliff trestle bridge borders the Fun Spot site on the west. The original bridge was built in 1918 by the Southern Pacific Railroad, and was considered unusual due to its truss design and use of timbers. The bridge was listed in the City’s Historical Building Survey, but was closed to traffic in 1992 due to its deteriorated condition. The bridge was reconstructed and reopened in 2000 with a design and materials similar to the original structure with incorporation of the historic truss design. The West Cliff Drive Bridge (bridge number 36C-0127) was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 as part of Caltrans’ study of historic bridges in California. It was rebuilt following NHPA Section 106 consultation.

- The bridge will not be directly affected by future development of the Depot site, but is adjacent to the site, is a striking visual feature and is associated with the historical development pattern of the area. Development should take into consideration the indirect effects (i.e., alteration of setting and visual corridors) on this resource.
  - There are no previously recorded archaeological resources on the parcel. Considering the environmental setting and past development of the property it is unlikely that prehistoric archaeological resources exist but the potential for encountering either prehistoric or historic archaeological resources below the present ground surface cannot be entirely discounted. Should the Fun Spot be selected for development, prudent actions could entail either subsurface exploration for archaeological resources prior to development or archaeological monitoring of construction-related excavations.
- ◆ **Railroad Safety Issues:** Appropriate building setbacks and other measures will be necessary for siting a building adjacent to railroad tracks.

### *Hazards / Site Constraints*

- ◆ **Site Constraints:** Building layout and design options are constrained by small, irregularly shaped parcel that is bisected by railroad tracks; setback from railroad tracks may be needed.
- ◆ **Geologic / Geotechnical Hazards:** The site is located in an area of high seismic activity and will likely be subject to strong seismic shaking in the future. The site is potentially underlain at shallow depths by some or all of the following: liquefiable sand; compressible silt, clay, and peat; non-engineered fill; and bedrock. Potential hazards due to the presence of these earth materials include liquefaction, lateral spreading, earthquake-induced settlement and static settlement. There is a high potential for significant differential settlement to occur if the site is underlain by earth materials with divergent strength characteristics. Groundwater under the site will likely be shallow, salt-bearing and tidally-influenced, creating potentially corrosive foundation conditions. These potential hazards will require further studies prior to construction to determine degree, type and cost of mitigations.
- The Fun Spot site was formerly a gas station; research shows there was a release of gasoline from underground storage tanks removed in 1980. The leaking underground fuel tank site gained regulatory case closure (no further action) following characterization drilling, removal of contaminated soil at the former tank pit location, groundwater monitoring and case closure in 2001 by the County of Santa Cruz Environmental Health Department. Although the site does not appear to have significant hazards or risks, a Phase II drilling program is recommended due to the potential for disturbing previously undiscovered contaminated soils during new grading and construction.
- ◆ **Flood Hazards:** Flooding potential due to spill-over from San Lorenzo River and Neary Lagoon is high, with base flood elevations posted on the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map varying

between 5 and 14 feet above mean sea level. A recently completed flood control project that raised the levee height along the San Lorenzo River has resulted in elimination of FEMA flood elevation construction requirements for new buildings and improvements. Flooding potential due to storm-wave run-up may be low to moderate.

### ***Access / Parking***

- ◆ **Access / Traffic:** Good vehicular, transit, shuttle, bicycle, pedestrian and recreational rail access to the site currently exists. Bicycle lanes and paths exist in the area, and additional multi-modal transportation facilities are planned on the City-owned Depot site of which the Fun Spot parcel is a part.
  - Access is provided to the site by Pacific Avenue, Beach Street and West Cliff Drive. Traffic congestion exists in the vicinity during summer and peak weekend periods. The Pacific Avenue / Beach Street intersection currently operates at an unacceptable level of service of F on peak weekend days. According to the B/SOL Plan EIR, buildout of the Plan Area will generate approximately 11,530 daily trips or less under the Reduced Commercial Alternative analyzed in the Final EIR and was further reduced with final adoption of the B/SOL Plan. The B/SOL Plan EIR found that existing traffic conditions will worsen with buildout of the B/SOL area, and buildout would further reduce levels of service at some intersections, which are already unacceptable at some vicinity locations. The B/SOL Plan and EIR identify intersection and signal improvements to be implemented in the future, although the timing of implementation is not known.
  - Although the proposed Visitor Center is expected to draw primarily from existing visitors in the vicinity, rather than being a new attraction generating additional trips, some additional traffic would be expected, including staff, deliveries and bus trips<sup>2</sup>. The B/SOL Plan EIR included a 3,000-4,000 square foot MBNMS Visitor Center in the traffic analysis. *Payment of fair-share contribution to cumulative Beach area intersection and traffic improvements may be required.*
- ◆ **Recreational Rail Access:** The Fun Spot site is bisected by existing railroad tracks that support visitor services provided by Roaring Camp and Big Trees Railroad, as well as commercial shipments by the Davenport Line of the Union Pacific Railroad. Rail traffic on the main UP tracks currently consists of three freight trains per week. The trains run on weekdays and typically

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<sup>2</sup> For example, a Visitor Center at this location may generate approximately 40 weekday peak hour trips and approximately 70 weekend peak hour trips based on estimated peak day visitation levels (with an assumption that weekdays will generate less traffic than weekends); estimated employee, delivery, and group bus trips; and assumptions that at least 10% of daily visitor trips will be attracted to the site and 20% of the daily trips will be generated in the peak hour.

travel northbound through the area around 1:00 PM and southbound around 4:00 PM. The Roaring Camp/Big Trees Railroad (RC/BT) operates seasonal recreational use trains twice a day between June and Labor Day, with weekend-only service in May and September-October. The trains travel approximately 5 miles per hour with an estimated ridership of 200 to 500 persons per trip, with an average of 250 riders during peak months.

- ◆ **Parking:** The site currently contains 20 public parking spaces at Lot 18 at the corner of Pacific and Beach. According to parking surveys conducted for the B/SOL Plan, existing beach visitor public parking demand is estimated at 3,251 spaces during the peak weekend period, and existing public parking spaces total 3,562, resulting in an existing surplus of 311 public parking spaces during the peak weekend period. The Depot Site Master Plan provides 214 public parking spaces, which include replacement of the spaces potentially removed at the Fun Spot site with future site master plan development. The Master Plan will result in a net increase of 21 public parking spaces.
  - Although the proposed Visitor Center is expected to draw primarily from existing visitors in the vicinity, some project parking demand would be expected. Preliminary estimates indicate that the Visitor Center could require approximately 16 parking spaces according to rates used by the City for the nearby planned Natural History Museum. *Public parking to support the Visitor Center is available on-site or on the northern portion of the adjacent Santa Cruz Depot site.*

### ***Services / Infrastructure***

- ◆ **Water Availability:** The site would be served by City of Santa Cruz Water Department. Current and future water demand within the City's water service area exceeds the safe yield of the supply system during drought conditions. The City currently implements demand reduction and rationing measures during droughts and has begun implementation of other water conservation programs, such as retrofit programs. The City is in the process of conducting an integrated water planning process to identify one or more supplemental sources of water supply. At this time, the study is looking primarily at desalination options. At this time, the City has not taken any action regarding a specific supplemental water supply project, and there are no City-imposed limits on new development.
- ◆ **Wastewater / Infrastructure:** Wastewater treatment is provided by the City's wastewater treatment plant that has adequate capacity to serve planned growth in the City. There are no other known infrastructure/capacity issues or constraints that would require major upgrades to water, sewer or storm drain lines.

### ***Regulatory Requirements***

- ◆ **City Council Approval of Use:** City Council approval of visitor-serving use for the site is required.



- ◆ **Permits:** Coastal and design permit approval required from City Zoning Administrator and would be processed concurrently.
- ◆ **Environmental Review:** CEQA environmental review is required due to ownership of land by City, which is subject to local permits. Due to the existing B/SOL Plan EIR analyses, it is expected that an Initial Study / Negative Declaration could be prepared. Potential issues for review include traffic, parking, visual impacts, and cultural resources review. NEPA review is required, which likely would be an Environmental Assessment or possibly a Categorical Exclusion. Section 106 review may be required if National Register eligible railroad trestle bridge is impacted.

#### *Community Support / Concerns*

- ◆ Public ly stated support from City and UCSC and other entities such as the Conference and Visitors Council and the Museum of Natural History.
- ◆ City and Redevelopment Agency offering to actively participate as appropriate.
- ◆ Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History interested in developing partnership.
- ◆ Details regarding community support and concerns are discussed in greater depth in the Phase I report.

#### *Additional Studies Needed*

- ◆ Geotechnical and Geologic studies
- ◆ Phase II environmental site assessment (potential) to further evaluate the presence of soil contamination.
- ◆ Archaeological review and/or monitoring during construction

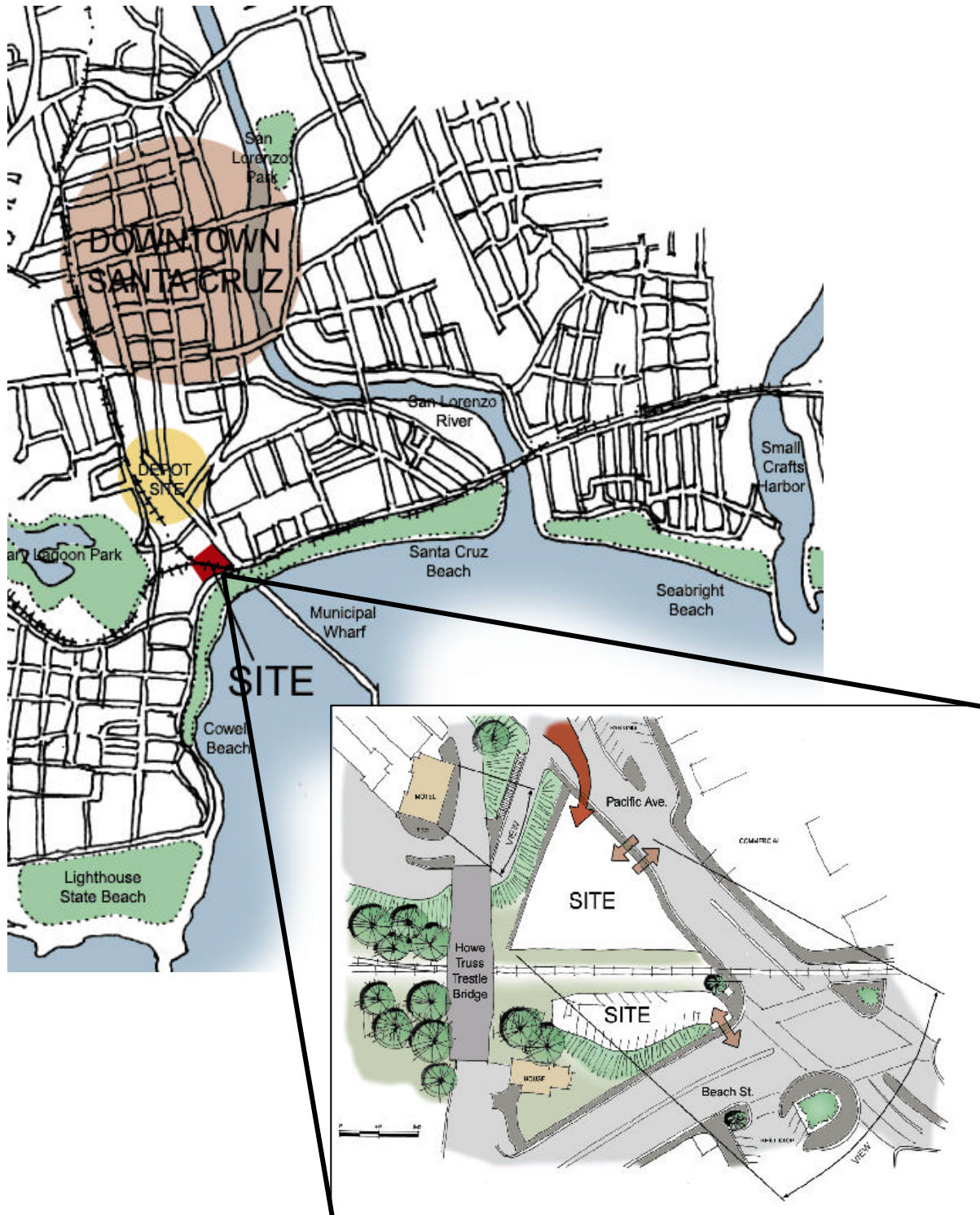


Figure 4: Santa Cruz Fun Spot  
Existing Conditions

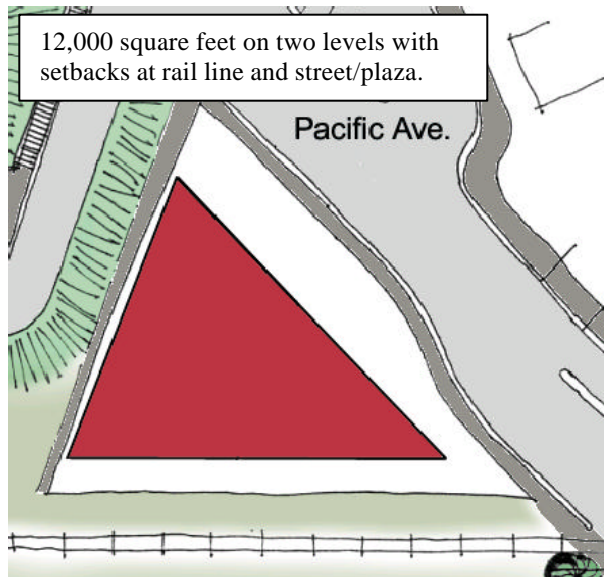
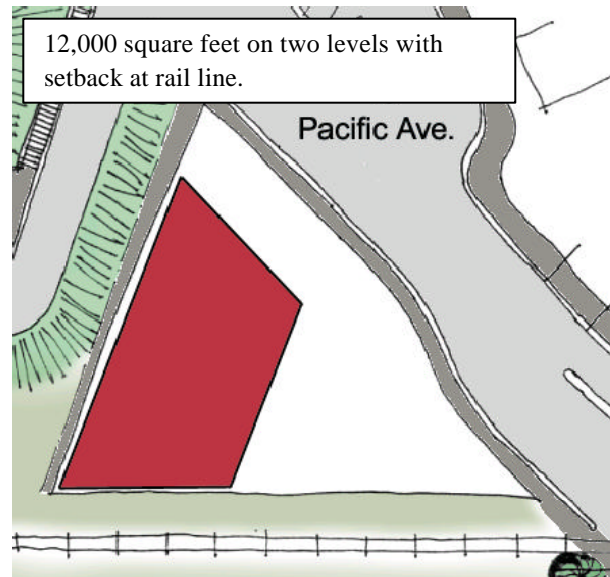
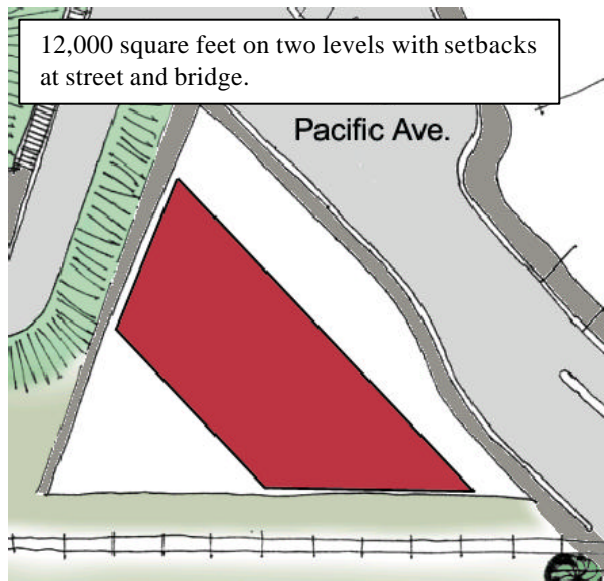


Figure 5: Three Santa Cruz Fun Spot Configuration Options





Figure 6: Views of Fun Spot Site  
from West Cliff



Figure 7: View of Site from West  
Cliff Drive Trestle Bridge

## Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk Site

The Boardwalk site is located on the third floor of the existing Cocoanut Grove Building at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk amusement park. The space is currently used for storage. Specific features include:

- ◆ The Cocoanut Grove Building is a local landmark with a long history as an entertainment venue. A main entry point to the Visitor Center is proposed on the northeast side of the building, which provides access to an elevator and stairs. A second stairwell, which could be used for access, is inside a covered arcade on the beach side.
- ◆ From the adjacent parking lot, the entry is reached by crossing Beach Street and an active rail line.
- ◆ The proposed space has two main areas: a small entry area near restrooms and a larger area with an ocean view. The square footage, as proposed, only accommodates half of the 12,000 square foot Facility Program. Additional space for administration, storage and other support functions would have to be found elsewhere.
- ◆ The key to this site is giving identity to the Visitor Center through signage and easy access from both parking and beach sides.

### *Summary of Constraints / Issues*

- ◆ **Land Use:** Visitor Center use is permitted under existing land use and zoning designations. MBNMS Visitor Center use is specifically identified for location in the Wharf area in City plans.
- ◆ **Resources/Environmental Issues:** None.
- ◆ **Hazards / Site Constraints:** Exposure to seismic shaking that may require additional building retrofits; review of asbestos/lead should occur if any building demolition is planned.
- ◆ **Access & Parking:** Good vehicular, transit, bicycle, pedestrian and visitor rail access exists. On-site Traffic congestion exists during summer and peak weekend periods. Parking is available on-site and in immediate area. Parking is available in immediate area.
- ◆ **Services:** There are no known constraints except potential citywide water shortages during a drought. There are no other known infrastructure/capacity issues that would require major upgrades to water, sewer or storm drain lines.
- ◆ **Community Support:** Strong City and UCSC support for Visitor Center to be located in Santa Cruz. The Seaside Company has also expressed a high level of interest in partnering with MBNMS for this project.
- ◆ **Regulatory Requirements:** No permits or CEQA review are required. Appropriate federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is required, which likely would be a Categorical Exclusion.

### *Existing Site Conditions*

- ◆ 6,500 square feet located within an existing building at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk; privately-owned property (APN 005-341-21).

***Design Concept***

- ◆ Approximate 6,500 square foot space located within the existing Coconut Grove building at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk (see Figure 8).
- ◆ Annual visitation estimated at 366,000 to the Visitor Center.

***Land Use Considerations***

- ◆ **General Plan / LCP Designation:** RVC – Regional Visitor Commercial. *A Visitor Center use is permitted within this designation.*
- ◆ **Zoning:** C-B / CZO – Beach Commercial / Coastal Zone Overlay District. *Visitor Center use is permitted.*
- ◆ **Beach and South of Laurel Comprehensive Area Plan (B/SOL Plan):** The Beach and South of Laurel Comprehensive Area Plan (B/SOL Plan) was adopted by the City Council in October 1998. It provides the governing land use, circulation and design policies for this planning area, in which the Beach Boardwalk is located. It was certified in 2002 by the California Coastal Commission as part of the City's certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) for the Beach area. The Plan supports a 3,000-4,000 square foot Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center on the wharf, and such development was accounted for in the B/SOL Plan EIR analyses.
- ◆ **Relevant Use / Siting Policies:** None.
- ◆ **Compatibility with Adjacent Uses:** Surrounding uses consist of a variety of visitor-serving and coastal recreational uses. The site is located within an existing building in the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. Nearby uses include the Municipal Wharf and recreational trails, including West Cliff Drive. A Natural History Museum is planned for the Depot site. *A Visitor Center at this location would be compatible with the nearby uses.*

***Resources / Environmental Issues***

- ◆ No known resource / environmental issues due to location within an existing building.

***Hazards / Site Constraints***

- ◆ **Geologic / Geotechnical Hazards:** The site is located in an area of high seismic activity and will likely be subject to strong seismic shaking in the future. The existing structure was reportedly seismically retrofitted in the mid-1980s, according to the Beach Boardwalk staff, but verification has not yet been obtained. Regardless of the past retrofit, the structure may have to be investigated and seismically retrofitted to bring it in compliance with current codes and ordinances for the proposed use of a federal visitor center. The site is also potentially underlain at shallow depths by some or all of the following: liquefiable sand; compressible silt, clay, organic-rich soil and non-engineered fill. Potential hazards due to these geologic conditions include liquefaction, lateral spreading, earthquake induced settlement and static settlement. The lateral spreading hazard is dependent on the design and construction of the seawall southeast of the property. Groundwater under the site will likely be shallow, salt-bearing and tidally-influenced, creating potentially corrosive foundation conditions, should the need for a foundation retrofit arise.

- Record searches regarding hazardous substances indicate that the Beach Boardwalk site does not appear to have significant liability. In addition, it is unlikely that the Beach Boardwalk site will require major earthwork for construction as the building is in place. However, investigation of the work area for asbestos and lead paint is recommended if remodeling plans include demolition/construction of walls or ceiling.

### ***Access / Parking***

- ◆ **Access / Traffic:** Good vehicular, transit, shuttle, bicycle, pedestrian and visitor rail access exists. Bicycle lanes and pedestrian paths exist in the area, and additional multi-modal transportation facilities are planned on the City-owned Depot site, located nearby.
  - Access is provided to the site by Pacific Avenue, Beach Street and West Cliff Drive. Traffic congestion exists in the vicinity during summer and peak weekends. The Pacific Avenue / Beach Street intersection currently operates at unacceptable level of service of F on peak weekend days. According to the B/SOL Plan EIR, buildout of the Plan Area will generate approximately 11,530 daily trips or less under the Reduced Commercial Alternative analyzed in the Final EIR and further reduced with final adoption of the B/SOL Plan. The B/SOL Plan EIR found that existing traffic conditions will worsen with buildout of the B/SOL area, and buildout would further reduce levels of service at some intersections, which are already unacceptable at some vicinity locations. The B/SOL Plan and EIR identify intersection and signal improvements to be implemented in the future, although the timing of implementation is not known.
  - Although the proposed Visitor Center is expected to draw primarily from existing visitors in the vicinity, rather than being a new attraction generating additional trips, some additional traffic would be expected, including staff, deliveries and bus trips. The B/SOL Plan EIR included a 3,000-4,000 square foot MBNMS Visitor Center in the traffic analysis.
- ◆ **Recreational Rail Access:** The Boardwalk site is served by the existing visitor services provided by Roaring Camp and Big Trees Railroad as well as commercial shipments by the Davenport Line of the Union Pacific Railroad. Rail traffic on the main UP tracks currently consists of three freight trains per week. The trains run on weekdays and typically travel northbound through the area around 1:00 PM and southbound around 4:00 PM. The Roaring Camp/Big Trees Railroad (RC/BT) operates seasonal recreational use trains twice a day between June and Labor Day, with weekend-only service in May and September-October. The trains travel approximately 5 miles per hour with an estimated ridership of 200 to 500 persons per trip, with an average of 250 riders during peak months.
- ◆ **Parking:** According to parking surveys conducted for the B/SOL Plan, existing beach visitor public parking demand is estimated at 3,251 spaces during the peak weekend period, and existing public parking spaces total 3,562, resulting in an existing surplus of 311 public parking spaces during the peak weekend period. Although the proposed Visitor Center is expected to draw primarily from existing visitors in the vicinity, some project parking

demand would be expected. *Public parking to support the Visitor Center is available in the immediate vicinity.*

### ***Services / Infrastructure***

- ◆ **Water Availability:** The site would be served by City of Santa Cruz Water Department. Current and future water demand within the City's water service area exceeds the safe yield of the supply system during drought conditions. The City currently implements demand reduction and rationing measures during droughts and has begun implementation of other water conservation programs, such as retrofit programs. The City is in the process of conducting an integrated water planning process to identify one or more supplemental sources of water supply. At this time, the study is looking primarily at desalination options. At this time, the City has not taken any action regarding a specific supplemental water supply project, and there are no City-imposed limits on new development.
- ◆ **Wastewater / Infrastructure:** Wastewater treatment is provided by the City's wastewater treatment plant that has adequate capacity to serve planned growth in the City. There are no known infrastructure capacity issues or constraints.

### ***Regulatory Requirements***

- ◆ **Permits:** No permits are required for a new use in an existing building. It is noted that at this time, the California Coastal Commission retains coastal permit jurisdiction over the Boardwalk, although the City is working to transfer jurisdiction to the City.
- ◆ **Environmental Review:** CEQA review is not required. Appropriate federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is required, which likely would be a Categorical Exclusion.

### ***Community Support / Concerns***

- ◆ Publicly stated support from the City, the Seaside Company and UCSC for the Visitor Center to be located within City of Santa Cruz.
- ◆ The Seaside Company has also expressed a high level of interest in partnering with MBNMS for this project.
- ◆ Details regarding community support and concerns are discussed in greater depth in the Phase I report.

### ***Additional Studies Needed***

- ◆ Geologic / geotechnical studies, possibly in conjunction with structural analysis to ascertain if foundation alterations are needed.
- ◆ Limited Phase II environmental site assessment program if ground disturbance is planned.
- ◆ Asbestos/lead survey if any building demolition is planned.





Figure 8: Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk Space Configuration

## State of California Seacliff State Beach Site

The Seacliff site sits on a bluff overlooking the bay, beyond the small community of Aptos. Part of the Seacliff State Beach, it is currently a parking area and vacant lot surrounded by residential properties. For this analysis, the consulting team considered several areas on the bluff top to potentially locate the Visitor Center. Specific features include:

- ◆ The site offers dramatic views of the bay, the pier and the concrete ship below.
- ◆ The Visitor Center would not be visible from the entry drive. A visitor would have to pass the entry station and enter the park to locate the Visitor Center.
- ◆ The beach is accessed from a stair or driveway. Amenities such as concessions, restrooms, picnic shelters and camping are provided at the foot of the bluff.
- ◆ The open nature of the site allows the entire Facility Program to be accommodated.

## Summary of Constraints / Issues

- ◆ **Land Use:** Visitor Center use is permitted under existing County land use and zoning designations, but use is not included in the Seacliff State Beach General Plan.
- ◆ **Resources/Environmental Issues:** Protection of public and scenic ocean views.
- ◆ **Hazards / Site Constraints:** Requires bluff top setback.
- ◆ **Access & Parking:** Good vehicular access exists, but pedestrian and bicycle accesses are intermittent. Project would be required to pay County traffic improvement fees. Impacts on State Beach parking and potential overflow parking in Seacliff Village are a major concern.
- ◆ **Services:** New or upgraded water connection from Soquel Creek Water District will require compliance with District's retrofit program.
- ◆ **Community Support:** Both public support and opposition have been received.
- ◆ **Regulatory Requirements:** Requires State amendment of Seacliff State Beach General Plan and approval of coastal development permit from the County of Santa Cruz with appropriate CEQA review, likely an EIR. Appropriate federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is required, which likely would be an Environmental Assessment.

## Existing Site Conditions

- ◆ Entire State Beach is 21.07 acres; State-owned property (APN 042-112-03).
- ◆ The State Beach includes the coastal bluff area of approximately three acres, an overnight use area, and a day-use area with over one million estimated

annual visitors. A small (approximately 2,000 square foot) visitor center is located adjacent to the pedestrian pathway along the beach.

- The coastal bluff site is partially undeveloped, and partially developed with a paved and landscaped 365-space parking lot and corporation yard buildings. The undeveloped area is used during peak visitor periods for overflow parking with an estimated capacity of 250 cars.
- ◆ Flat and partially paved, bisected by storm drains, with several large Monterey Cypress trees and other ornamental landscaping. Existing storm drains traverse portions of the parking lot.
- ◆ County of Santa Cruz and State Department of Parks and Recreation are working together on new streetscape design along State Park Drive, Center Avenue, Broadway and Santa Cruz Avenue in nearby Seacliff Village.

### ***Design Concept***

- ◆ Approximate 12,000 square foot facility.
- ◆ Building design considers a building on the existing developed parking lot portion of the site. (See Figure 9.) Siting the building in the overflow parking area was considered, but rejected due to concerns regarding view impacts.
- ◆ Annual visitation estimated at 116,000 to the Visitor Center.

### ***Land Use Considerations***

- ◆ **County of Santa Cruz General Plan / LCP Designation:** Existing Parks and Recreation. This designation allows low intensity uses in open space areas and allows commercial recreation, County, State and federal parks, preserves, research stations for parklands that are developable. *A Visitor Center use is consistent with uses permitted under this designation.*
- ◆ **County Zoning:** Zoned as Parks (PR). *A Visitor Center use is consistent with uses permitted under this designation.*
- ◆ **Seacliff Village Plan:** This County plan was recently approved with modifications by the California Coastal Commission as part of the County's General Plan/LCP. The plan is comprised of 38 parcels on approximately 21 acres of land adjacent to and surrounding Seacliff State Beach, but does not include the state beach site. The plan focuses on visitor and neighborhood serving commercial land uses, circulation and design issues. The plan notes that Seacliff State Beach visitors and nearby residential neighborhoods are potential customer base for Seacliff Village. The plan also notes that the Seacliff Village area is located adjacent to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, "a built-in visitor attraction that will continue to provide a demand for visitor services."
  - Although Seacliff State Beach is not within the plan area, the plan notes that it is an integral part of Seacliff Village, and that a portion of the site could be used for a Sanctuary Visitor Center/Museum. The plan also notes that such development would need to undergo "thorough" environmental analysis including potential impacts to views, traffic and parking. The plan supports design and landscaping improvements to the fenced corporation yard portion of the site. The plan also indicates that if the nearby McGregor site is purchased and developed as a park, there would be no need for a play area in the

parking reserve-overflow area of the State Beach as recommended in the County General Plan / LCP (see “Relevant Use/Siting Policies” below).

- ◆ **Seacliff State Beach General Plan:** Adopted in May 1990 by the California Parks and Recreation Commission, the plan identifies programs, uses and improvements for this state beach facility. The plan calls for maintaining the existing parking lot and overflow parking area for a total capacity of 600 cars with landscaping, benches, and beach access improvements. *Development of a Visitor Center would require an amendment to the General Plan. A Visitor Center use is not consistent with uses currently outlined in this plan.*
- ◆ **Relevant Use/Siting Policies:**
  - **Uses:** The County General Plan/LCP supports the mission of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary “to facilitate the long-term management, protection, understanding and awareness of its resources and qualities” (Policy 5.3.1). The County General Plan / LCP also encourages the State to provide more access to Seacliff Beach, and to develop the Seacliff parking reserve for a play area (Policy 7.8.7).
  - **Development Siting:** The County General Plan/LCP requires a development setback from coastal bluffs sufficient to provide a stable building site over a 100-year lifetime of the structure, with a minimum of 25 feet (Policy 6.2.11).
  - **Height Limits:** 28 feet per County Zoning Ordinance.
  - **Design:** The County General Plan/LCP seeks to protect significant public vistas from all publicly used roads and vista points (Policy 5.10.3) and to maintain existing public ocean views to the maximum extent possible (Policy 5.10.6). New structures that would be visible from the public beach are prohibited (Policy 5.10.7). The Seacliff Beach area is also designated as a “Coastal Special Community” in the County General Plan (Policy 8.8.2). None of the streets in the area are County-designated scenic roads.

The Seacliff Village Plan notes that “the panoramic, scenic views from the Seacliff village area to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and surrounding mountains shall receive the highest amount of attention and level of protection possible,” and the plan seeks to protect scenic views of the Sanctuary. More specifically, the plan identifies the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary as a community landmark, and indicates, “Views to the Sanctuary shall be preserved.”

- ◆ **Compatibility with Adjacent Uses:** Surrounding uses consist of a variety of residential and commercial uses. The Seacliff Village Plan, in part, encourages visitor uses in the area, drawing on the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Seacliff State Beach. *A Visitor Center at this location would be compatible with the nearby existing and planned uses.*

### ***Resources / Environmental Issues***

- ◆ **Public Views / Design:** A design that prevents obstruction of public views of the ocean would be required due to County General Plan/LCP policies.

Additionally, as indicated above, the Seacliff Village Plan seeks to protect scenic views of the sanctuary, and states that, “any new development or restoration of existing buildings or elements located within any viewing area of the Sanctuary will need to be sensitive and harmonize with, this identified visual resource.”

- The view from State Park Drive on the approach to the state park offers a scenic panoramic view of the ocean (see Figure 10), although the view is oriented to the southwest in the opposite direction of the potential Visitor Center site locations. Views from Seacliff Drive, a local street that borders the state beach on the northeast, is largely limited to the state beach undeveloped area and parking lot (see Figure 11). Due to the topography in this area, views of the ocean from the roadway are mostly blocked except at the intersection of Seacliff Drive and Broadway. Concerns regarding obstruction of private views from residences along Seacliff Drive also have been expressed.
- ◆ **Cultural Resources:** There are two previously recorded archaeological resources but no historic buildings or structures associated with this three-acre area at Seacliff State Beach. An archaeological reconnaissance found no other archaeological resources. The Seacliff State Beach General Plan does identify one very small shell midden on the edge of the bluff southeast of the upper parking lot, which has been recorded as SCR-201, and is subject to future loss due to cliff retreat. This resource would be outside any development area. Testing of another site (SCR-264) adjacent to the existing park visitor center found no evidence of artifacts or cultural resources at that location. Paleontological resources (fossils) are reported on bluffs, but would not be affected by development.

### ***Hazards / Site Constraints***

- ◆ **Geologic / Geotechnical Hazards:** The site is located in an area of high seismic activity and will likely be subject to strong seismic shaking in the future. Potential geotechnical hazards requiring further study are: expansive potential of foundation zone soil, settlement potential, and corrosivity of soil.
  - Database records show the Seacliff State Beach maintenance facility, located immediately upgradient of the paved parking lot portion of the subject site, had a diesel release in December 1999, during the removal of underground fuel storage tanks (USTs) at the facility. A UST closure report documented elevated concentrations of diesel and trace levels of gasoline beneath the tanks and dispensers (diesel up to 5,900 mg/kg, gasoline up to 150 mg/kg). The County of Santa Cruz directed the owner to characterize the extent in 2000 but no additional work has been documented. There are no documented off-site environmental cases identified that have the potential to impact the site. Although there is a documented diesel release on the adjoining parcel, the Seacliff State Beach site does not appear to have significant liability because the release appears to be primarily diesel, which has a limited health risk and is unlikely to impact building operations. However, since the Seacliff State Beach site will require major earthworks for construction of a new building we recommend completing a limited Phase II drilling program upgradient and within the building envelope to provide assurances

against the discovery of unexpected contamination during construction (refer to Toxic Hazards appendix for additional information).

- **Coastal Bluff Retreat:** Retreat of the coastal bluff in this area is an on-going episodic process, driven by landsliding during intense rainfall events and earthquakes, and storm-wave erosion. The sea wall located seaward of the bluff appears to have essentially eliminated the storm-wave erosion hazard, based upon historical aerial photograph analysis. The potential for coastal bluff retreat to adversely impact the Visitor Center is entirely dependent upon the distance between the Visitor Center and the top of the coastal bluff. The County General Plan/LCP requires a development setback from coastal bluffs sufficient to provide a stable building site over a 100-year lifetime of the structure with a minimum of 25 feet. A setback of at least 100 feet may satisfy this stipulation without triggering further geologic studies.

### *Access/Parking*

- ◆ **Access / Traffic:** Good vehicular access to the site currently exists, but bicycle and pedestrian access are intermittent. The site is accessed from State Highway 1 via State Park Drive, a 2-lane arterial road. The County General Plan/LCP recommended widening State Park Drive to 4 lanes from Center Street to Soquel Drive with installation of signals at the Highway One off-ramps and at Searidge Drive; to date, Highway One signals have been installed with partial widening north of Highway One. The Seacliff Village Plan calls for widening State Park Drive to 3 lanes from the Highway 1 southbound intersection to Seacliff State Beach with lighting, pedestrian, and landscaping improvements.
  - Public streets in the area generally conform to County standards in terms of pavement width for automobiles, and the capacity of roadways and intersections is generally adequate to meet current traffic volumes except during busy summer weekends. However, the stop-controlled intersection at Sea Ridge Road and State Park Drive currently operates at unacceptable levels of service, and is projected to worsen with development in the area. The County of Santa Cruz strives to maintain a Level of Service (LOS) C at intersections and roadways, but D is considered the minimum acceptable LOS. Projects that cause LOS to drop below D or contribute more than 1% traffic increase to impacted intersections (operating at E or F) must mitigate impacts. Although the proposed Visitor Center is expected to draw primarily from existing visitors in the vicinity, rather than being a new attraction generating additional trips, some additional traffic would be expected, including staff, deliveries and bus trips<sup>3</sup>. *The project would be required to pay County traffic improvement fees.*

<sup>3</sup> For example, a Visitor Center at this location may generate approximately 20 weekday peak hour trips and approximately 30 weekend peak hour trips based on estimated peak day visitation levels (with an assumption that weekdays will generate less traffic than weekends); estimated employee, delivery, and group bus trips; and assumptions that at least 10% of daily visitor trips will be attracted to the site and 20% of the daily trips will be generated in the peak hour.

- Public streets in the immediate vicinity have limited public parking, limited street lighting, sporadic bicycle improvements, virtually no curbs, gutters or landscaping and no coordinated pedestrian facilities. The County indicates that improvements are needed on all street segments in the Seacliff Village Plan area, but funds are not available. The County and State Department of Parks and Recreation are currently working together on streetscape improvements at the entrance to Seacliff State Beach to include pedestrian, parking, and landscaping improvements.
- ◆ **Visitor Rail:** The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) has approved a program of projects in the Watsonville to Santa Cruz corridor that includes acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line for future transportation purposes. The rail line is located just north of Seacliff State Beach. The proposed projects include a bicycle and pedestrian path along the rail line, and the Commission is in the preliminary stages of considering implementing recreational passenger rail service between Seascape and Capitola.
- ◆ **Parking:** The Seacliff Village area is deficient in parking, and State Beach day visitors often park outside of the park in order to avoid entrance fees. The existing State Beach paved parking lot is full on peak weekends throughout the year when weather is favorable and on holidays. The Overflow parking area is utilized on several peak weekends per year (i.e. 4<sup>th</sup> of July). Under County regulations, approximately 48 parking spaces would be required for the facility, which could be accommodated on-site. Further review of parking demand and supply would be required to assure that adequate State Beach parking is maintained and that overflow parking onto adjacent neighborhoods can be prevented. *Parking demand that overflows onto adjacent streets and neighborhoods is a current concern and any additional impacts as a result of a Visitor Center at this location would need to be addressed.*

### ***Services / Infrastructure***

- ◆ **Water Availability:** The site would be served by the Soquel Creek Water District (SCWD). Due to long-term groundwater basin pumping and potential seawater intrusion, the District has been looking at supplemental water sources. In the interim, new water connections will be permitted, but in order to prevent increased demands on the basin, the District is in the process of adopting a program that would require new connections to retrofit existing uses in an amount equal to the proposed use. The project would be subject to SCWD retrofit program requirements.
- ◆ **Wastewater / Infrastructure:** Wastewater collected in the unincorporated County area by the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District is conveyed to the City of Santa Cruz wastewater treatment plant, which has adequate capacity to serve planned growth in the City. There are no known infrastructure capacity issues or constraints; although there are upstream storm drain capacity constraints and issues.

### ***Regulatory Requirements***

- ◆ **State Parks and Recreation Commission:** Amendment of State Parks General Plan to allow visitor-serving use in parking lot area will be required.
- ◆ **Permits:** Coastal permit approval from Santa Cruz County is required.

- ◆ **Environmental Review:** CEQA environmental review is required due to ownership of land by State and subject to coastal permit. Given issues and community interest in area, it is likely that an EIR would need to be prepared. Potential Issues for review include traffic, parking, and visual impacts. Appropriate federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is required, which likely would be an Environmental Assessment.

***Community Support /  
Concerns***

- ◆ State Park officials have expressed keen interest in partnering.
- ◆ Publicly stated opposition and support from area residents.
- ◆ Details regarding community support and concerns are discussed in greater depth in the Phase I report.

***Additional Studies Needed***

- ◆ Geologic / geotechnical assessments
- ◆ Phase II environmental site assessment (potential) to further evaluate the presence of soil contamination
- ◆ Traffic and parking studies
- ◆ Drainage study
- ◆ Visual simulations of building design and views.



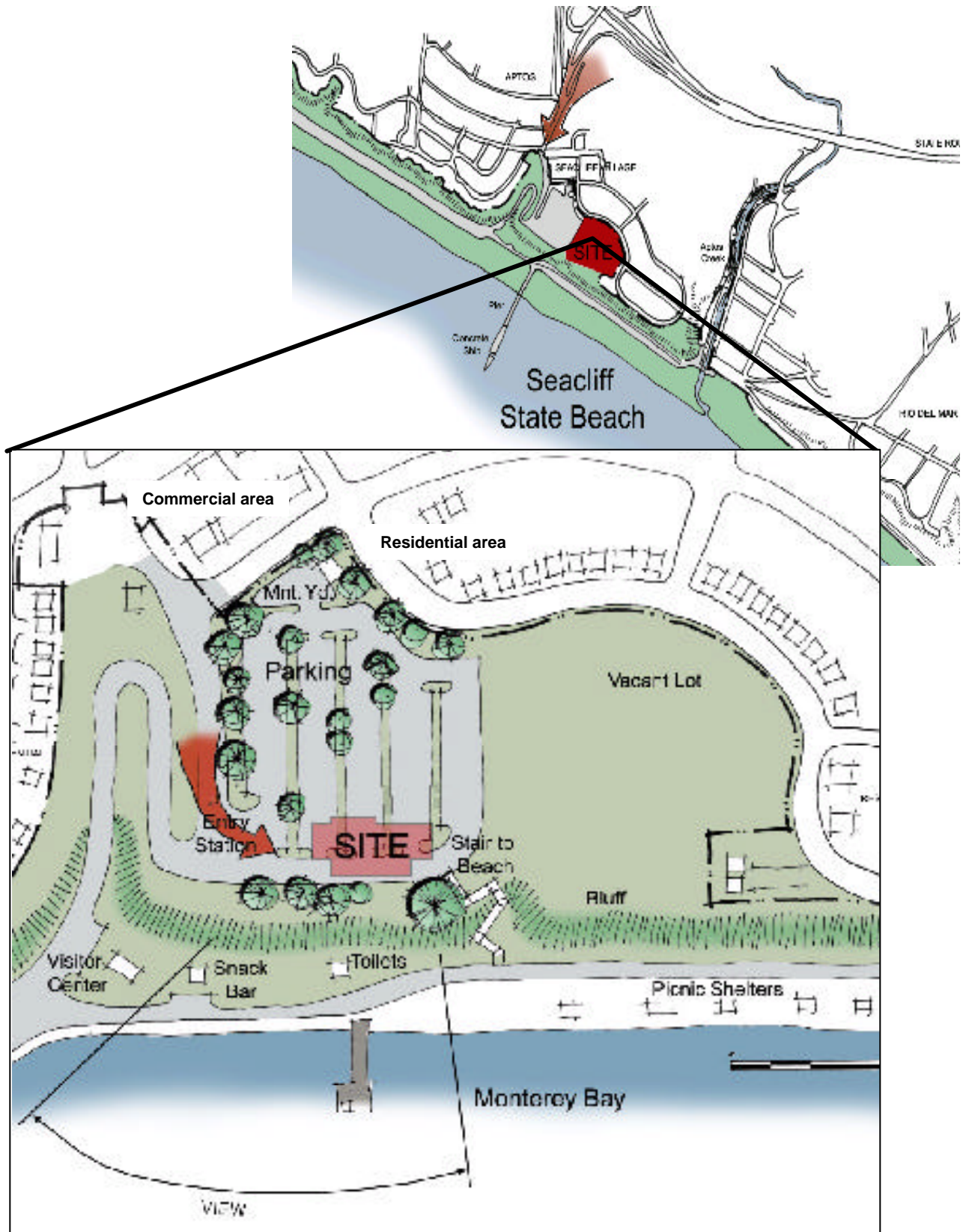


Figure 9: Seacliff State Beach Site Configuration Concept



Figure 10: Public Views From State Park Drive



Figure 11: View from Homes Along Seacliff Drive (proposed site would be a single story building in far right of photo.)

## **Summary of Sites**

The following table provides a summary of key objectives, design parameters, and environmental and resource issues for the four sites under consideration.

<b>MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY VISITOR CENTER SITE FEASIBILITY STUDY SUMMARY</b>				
	<b>CITY OF MONTEREY DEPOT SITE</b>	<b>CITY OF SANTA CRUZ FUN SPOT SITE</b>	<b>SANTA CRUZ BOARDWALK SITE</b>	<b>SEACLIFF STATE BEACH SITE</b>
<b>View</b>	The ocean is not visible from the site There is potential for an oblique view across the parking lot from the creation of a second story	An upper story is required for a clear view of the ocean and wharf	Unobstructed view of ocean, shore and wharf from third floor windows	Dramatic views of the bay, the pier and the concrete ship from parking area.
<b>Visitation to Location</b>	4 million	3.5 million	3.5 million	1 million
<b>Visibility</b>	Excellent visibility from Del Monte Avenue and easy access off this main arterial.	Site is obscured by the bluff from a southward approach, but opens up to a busy intersection	Space for Visitor Center located w/in Beach Boardwalk Arcade building. Outside signage necessary to inform public of Visitor Center within.	Obstructed view from the entry drive. Visitor must pass entry station to visually locate Visitor Center.
<b>Access to Shore</b>	Approx. 200' across active asphalt parking lot and driveway	Approx. 150' across well-marked cross-walk	Immediate access down stairs.	Beach must be accessed from stairs or driveway
<b>Interpretive Potential</b>	The site is in the vicinity of other interpretive venues. While it could offer natural history to compliment nearby maritime themes, it must also compete with the Aquarium. Being remote from the resource does not help, but this could be mitigated through proper site orientation. It would be part of a campus of visitor amenities in the Fisherman's Wharf area.	The site is in a prominent location, but its edges (and center) are active with train and/or vehicle traffic. This condition tends to isolate the site from the resource, despite its close proximity. With proper site orientation, the Visitor Center could make a connection to the resource. Partnership with Natural History Museum is also possible.	The site is located within an existing building not historically associated with natural history or conservation. This could potentially overshadow the scientific nature of the Marine Sanctuary mission. However, the Sanctuary's role as an educator could be highlighted at this popular entertainment venue.	The site presents a panoramic view of the bay in a location not frequented by most visitors to the coast. This relative isolation protects it, increasing its appeal to local traffic. Interpreting the bay from this location is appropriate if the inherent beauty of the park is not compromised by the endeavor.
<b>Land Use</b>	Permitted under existing and proposed land use and zoning designations.	Permitted under existing land use and zoning designations. MBNMS Visitor Center specifically identified in City B/SOL Plan.	Permitted under existing land use and zoning designations. MBNMS Visitor Center specifically identified in City B/SOL Plan.	Permitted under existing County land use and zoning designations, but use is not currently included in the Seacliff State Beach General Plan.

	<b>CITY OF MONTEREY DEPOT SITE</b>	<b>CITY OF SANTA CRUZ FUN SPOT SITE</b>	<b>SANTA CRUZ BOARDWALK SITE</b>	<b>SEACLIFF STATE BEACH SITE</b>
<b>Resources &amp; Environmental Issues</b>	Passenger Depot and Freight Depot buildings are historic resources, which would require further review and Section 106 consultation with SHPO and may affect type of building modifications. Additional archaeological review or monitoring may be needed.	Public views from West Cliff Drive bridge, potential indirect impacts to adjacent cultural resource (West Cliff Bridge) and public safety concerns due to location adjacent to railroad tracks. Additional archaeological review or monitoring may be needed.	No issues due to location within an existing structure.	Protection of public and scenic ocean views.
<b>Geologic and Geotechnical Hazards</b>	Potential geologic and geotechnical hazards requiring further study are: seismic shaking, coastal flooding, liquefaction, lateral spreading, settlement, and soil and groundwater corrosivity	Potential geologic and geotechnical hazards requiring further study are: seismic shaking, flooding due to river, lagoon and coastal setting, liquefaction, lateral spreading, settlement, differential settlement, and soil and groundwater corrosivity	Potential geologic and geotechnical hazards requiring further study are: seismic shaking, liquefaction, lateral spreading, settlement due to new loading conditions, differential settlement due to new loading conditions, and corrosivity of soil and groundwater for any new below -ground improvements	Visitor Center building setback of 100 feet or more from top of bluff likely required to avoid further study; potential geotechnical hazards requiring further study are: expansive potential of foundation zone soil, settlement potential, and corrosivity of soil.
<b>Toxic Hazards</b>	Significant potential for negative environmental conditions underlying this site; Fully scoped Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessment is recommended to identify all recognized environmental conditions and to quantify shallow soil and groundwater quality; also recommended: geophysical survey for underground storage tanks, and an asbestos and lead survey on the existing building	Low potential for negative environmental conditions underlying this former fuel leak site; Site has been cleared from a regulatory perspective; A Phase II drilling and soil and ground sampling program is recommended to provide assurances against the discovery of unexpected contamination during prospective new construction on the site.	Has the lowest potential for negative environmental conditions of all four sites considered; A work area check for asbestos and lead paint is recommended if remodeling plans of the existing building include demolition or construction of new walls and ceilings.	Low potential for negative environmental conditions underlying this site; a limited Phase II drilling program upgradient and within the building envelope is recommended to provide assurances against the discovery of unexpected contamination during construction

	CITY OF MONTEREY DEPOT SITE	CITY OF SANTA CRUZ FUN SPOT SITE	SANTA CRUZ BOARDWALK SITE	SEACLIFF STATE BEACH
<b>Architectural Constraints</b>	Existing building has approx. one-third of estimated Facility Program Square Footage. To meet the program, an addition is required. A Historic Passenger Depot (trains, fishing industry) does not necessarily relate to the Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center as a building type.	Small, irregularly shaped parcel that is bisected by railroad tracks limits site layouts. The Facility Program could be accommodated, but multi-levels may be required. Structure of any height could have a negative impact on views from the motel on the bluff	Available space has approx. half of the estimated Facility Program. To meet the program, the Visitor Center would have to share spaces within the existing building, lease additional space, or locate off-site.	A new building on this site should preserve and enhance public views. Open nature of the site allows the entire Facility Program to be accommodated.
<b>Access &amp; Parking</b>	Good vehicular, shuttle, bicycle and pedestrian access exist. Parking available onsite. Development would be required to pay fair-share contribution to cost of intersection improvements.	Good vehicular, bus, bicycle, pedestrian and visitor rail access exists. Payment of fair-share contribution to cumulative Beach area intersection and traffic improvements may be required. Limited parking available onsite, but sufficient paid and unpaid parking in vicinity.	Good vehicular, bus, bicycle, pedestrian and visitor rail access exists. Paid parking available in immediate area.	Good vehicular access exists, but pedestrian and bicycle access is intermittent. Payment of County traffic improvement fees would be required. Potential overflow parking impact into Seacliff Village is a current concern.
<b>Services &amp; Infrastructure</b>	Project water demand cannot be fully met. City does not have remaining water allocation to serve project. Site water credits would provide only ½ of estimated project water demand. No other known infrastructure/capacity constraints that would require upgrades to water, sewer or storm drain lines.	No known problems or constraints, except potential Citywide water shortages during a drought.	No known problems or constraints, except potential Citywide water shortages during a drought.	No known problems or constraints.
<b>Regulatory Requirements</b>	Approval for use of site by City Council; approval of use permit by City Planning Commission; approval of coastal development permit from either the Coastal Commission or City (with CEQA review—likely IS/ND); and federal NEPA review.	Approval of coastal and design permits by City (with CEQA review—likely IS/ND) and federal NEPA review.	No permits are required due to location within existing building. Federal NEPA review required—likely Categorical Exclusion.	Requires State amendment of Seacliff State Beach General Plan; approval of coastal development permit from the County of Santa Cruz (with CEQA review, likely an EIR); and federal NEPA review.
<b>Cost Estimate</b> (figures represent “first costs” only)	\$6,090,000	\$5,700,000	\$2,800,000	\$5,755,125

## Site Ranking

### *Ranking Methodology*

The four sites have been ranked based on the consulting team's findings for each criterion. The team worked collectively to rank each site independent of client input. Before the ranking took place, the consultants ranked each criterion on a scale of one to eight to reflect the varying degrees of impact each category wields. Certain factors were identified by Sanctuary staff as "key criteria" during the first phase of this study process. Those key factors are (as ranked by the consulting team):

1. Visitation
2. View of the resource
3. Construction cost
4. Visibility (public's view of the facility)
5. Access to shore

In addition, the consulting team assigned weight to the remaining criteria based on the potential impact each factor may have on the development of a Visitor Center. For instance, "architectural constraints" receives a rank of 7 because it is more difficult to mitigate than "toxic hazards," which receives a rank of 8. "Visitation" receives the highest ranking (1); "View" is ranked second, and so forth.

The first table in Figure 12 represents the un-weighted rank of each site. That rank is then multiplied by the "weight"(or rank) of each criterion with the product represented in the second table. Note that a low number indicates a more favorable ranking or weighting.

Two categories produced a tie in the ranking between the Fun Spot and the Boardwalk, which are in close proximity to each other. In both cases, the research and data used by the consultants revealed that the issue would be identical for each site. Therefore, they were assigned the same rank.

### *A Word About Site Selection*

In the consultant's experience, site selection ultimately comes down to one key factor: opportunity. That is, which site offers the right opportunity for development and long-term success at the right time? The evaluation of the four considered sites reflects the nature and character of each site, its strengths and weaknesses and its potential for success. Though all of these factors have been organized, evaluated and "quantified" the more important factor of "opportunity" is simply un-quantifiable. Therefore, the consultants do not necessarily recommend that the Sanctuary pursue the site with the best score. However, we do conclude that the site with the best score represents the one that is the least expensive and has the fewest number of potential physical hazards and risks.

Figure 12: Site Ranking

Possible Sites	Evaluation Criteria (Sites ranked 1 - 4)														
	View	Visitation	Visibility	Access to Shore	Capital Cost Estimate	Interpretive Potential	Land Use Concerns	Resource/Enviro. Issues	Toxic Hazards	Architectural Constraints	Access & Parking	Services & Infrastructure	Regulatory Requirements	TOTAL SCORE	
Fun Spot	3	3	2	3	2	2	1	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	34
Beach Boardwalk	2	2	4	1	1	4	1	1	2	1	4	3	1	1	28
Seacliff	1	4	3	2	3	1	4	2	1	2	1	2	3	4	33
Monterey Depot	4	1	1	4	4	3	2	4	4	4	3	1	4	3	42
Rank of Categories (1-8)	2	1	4	5	3	6	7	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	
Possible Sites	Weighted Ranking (Lowest number = Highest rank)														
Fun Spot	6	3	8	15	6	12	7	24	24	24	14	21	14	14	192
Beach Boardwalk	4	2	16	5	3	24	7	8	16	8	28	21	7	7	156
Seacliff	2	4	12	10	9	6	28	16	8	16	7	14	21	28	181
Monterey Depot	8	1	4	20	12	18	14	32	32	32	21	7	28	21	250



### ***The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk***

While the three Santa Cruz County sites are very close in score, the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk ranked highest. The Boardwalk has fewer hazards and risks relative to the other sites that involve constructing a new facility at locations with potential geotechnical or environmental risks. The Boardwalk is essentially, a “tenant improvement” project which makes it the least expensive to develop. The site also ranks high in the categories of “visitation,” “view” and “access to shore.”

However, there are two serious downsides to the Boardwalk site. The first issue is the limited size of the available space. The Boardwalk has available approximately 6,500 square feet of space, which will require administrative offices, classrooms, meeting rooms and support spaces for the Visitor Center to be located off-site or elsewhere in the Boardwalk complex. This will create on-going challenges for the management and operations of the Center.

The second, and more difficult issue is the risk of the Sanctuary Visitor Center becoming “lost” within the numerous entertainment attractions featured at the Beach Boardwalk. While there is an opportunity for the Sanctuary to provide both fun and educational exhibits at the Boardwalk, it will be a constant struggle for the Visitor Center to achieve an identity and compete with the entertainment attractions there. Establishing greater awareness and recognition of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the National Marine Sanctuary System has been identified as one of the chief goals of the Visitor Center project.

The issue of “identity” was discussed with representatives from the Seaside Company (owners and operators of the Beach Boardwalk) who acknowledge this as a challenge and agreed, in principle, to assist with finding solutions. The consultants believe that this issue can be mitigated to a certain degree, but nevertheless the Visitor Center will not be able to attain the impact of a stand-alone facility.

### ***Seacliff State Beach***

The Seacliff State Beach site is a very strong site for many of the Phase II criteria. It is the least constrained architecturally, has few geotechnical or toxic hazards to mitigate and provides excellent “interpretive potential” due to the dramatic views and natural setting. Seacliff’s weaknesses include the requirement to amend the State Beach General Plan to allow for a visitor-serving facility on the bluff and its low visitation compared to the other sites. Amending the plan may be a relatively straightforward process, but the other sites already permit this type of use.

The visitation estimates are hotly contested by the various interested parties and range from less than 500,000 to over 2 million. The consultants elected to use the figure of 1 million visitors, as explained earlier in this report (see page 5) and in the Phase I report. It should be noted that even if the 2 million visitor figure were adopted for this evaluation, the site would receive the same ranking. We realize there is no pleasing any of the parties on this matter. State Parks could consider commissioning an in-depth visitor counting study to settle the issue.

### ***Fun Spot***

The Fun Spot in Santa Cruz also achieved a respectable score — only 11 points higher than Seacliff in the weighted ranking and one point higher in the un-weighted. On the ranking chart, the Fun Spot generally scored in the middle of the four and received mostly “2’s” and “3’s” but only one “1.”

The Fun Spot site has numerous attractive features such as its relatively easy access to the shore, the high number of visitors to the immediate area and that a structure built on this site would be highly visible to beach area visitors. The City of Santa Cruz has also expressed strong interest and enthusiasm in partnering with the Sanctuary to enable the development of this site.

It would be somewhat challenging to accommodate the full, 12,000 square foot facility program at this site due to its limited size and shape, and given set-back requirements. In addition, to provide visitors to the Center with a clear view of the ocean, a two-story building would be necessary, which would block or limit the view from the hotel located above the site on West Cliff. A two-story building would also partially block views of the historic trestle bridge. To utilize this site, a smaller facility program may be desirable.

### ***Monterey Depot***

The Monterey Depot site ranks the lowest of the four due, in large part, to the number of potential hazards and risks associated with renovating and adding-on to a historic building. Of the four sites, the Monterey Depot site has the highest potential for requiring toxic hazard mitigation, geologic/geotechnical mitigation and will require additional review by state and federal historic preservation agencies. However, even without the cost of additional studies and mitigations, the Monterey Depot has the highest capital cost estimate. Development at this site is also severely constrained by the availability of water, which would allow only half of the estimated demand of a 12,000 square foot facility. As a result, this site will not accommodate a large facility, but could be utilized if the program were scaled to fit within the existing building.

Despite these challenges, the site is highly visible to a large number of people and is adjacent to the heavily visited areas of Monterey. It also affords easy access to the shore and activities such as whale watching and kayaking. City officials in Monterey have expressed interest in cooperating with the Sanctuary to utilize the building and site.

## Concept for Consideration

After considering the numerous sites for over a year, the consultants believe that all four of the sites evaluated in this report represent excellent and unique opportunities for the Sanctuary to carry its message to visitors and residents in the Monterey Bay region. The consultants also recognize that the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's boundaries cover well over 200 miles of coastline from Marin County to Cambria and that interpretive elements will, most likely, be developed along the entire stretch. Therefore, what is developed in the Monterey Bay area will be a part of a broader Sanctuary interpretive framework.

When the project's goals and the desired visitor experience (see page 9) are applied to the four sites, their parallels and differences begin to come to light. All of the sites can accommodate exhibits, orientation theaters and access to the Sanctuary, at least through technological means. However, directly engaging the visitor with the resource, either visually or tactually, differs from site to site. Therefore, the interpretive program that may be appropriate to develop on each site differs.

Not all of the sites provide a direct view of the ocean, an important point of reference for such a facility. Two sites, the Fun Spot and Monterey Depot, have a more indirect relationship to the ocean. While the Boardwalk offers an ocean view, its setting is not as natural as Seacliff. To transport the visitor "into the world of the National Marine Sanctuary" takes more than one means, and the location of the Visitor Center plays a part in the experience. Considering the Visitor Center goals established by Sanctuary staff, and comparing these goals with the physical attributes and visitor profile of each considered site, it appears that together they accomplish the various goals, but no site is ideally suited to achieve all of them.

From the consultants' work with Sanctuary staff throughout the process of the study, we have identified three key goals for the Visitor Center.

- ◆ Increase the general public's awareness of Sanctuaries
- ◆ Foster greater stewardship of the Sanctuary through education
- ◆ Facilitate and deepen the public's engagement with the Sanctuary; "get them out IN IT"

Based on these goals, and considering the available sites' physical characteristics, market conditions and partnership opportunities, the consultants suggest that the Sanctuary consider a "dispersed" concept, rather than a "hub and spoke" scheme with one, major center and numerous other elements located along the coastline. Such a concept would take advantage of the many strategic partnership options available to the MBNMS and respond to the various visitor markets and visitation patterns. Furthermore, the visitor intercept survey data (from Phase I) indicates very little crossover in visitation from site to site. Multiple centers will enable a wider variety and higher number of visitors to connect with NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries. Specifically, we propose the following:

- ◆ Develop interpretive elements and experiences at the Boardwalk site that are fun, engaging and educational.

GOAL: Increase the general public awareness of Sanctuaries

CONCEPT: High-tech, hands-on learning attractions located in the available 6,500 square foot space and roaming “explainers” to provide visitors with fun and educational activities related to the National Marine Sanctuary.

MARKET RATIONALE: The data assembled from the visitor intercept survey conducted during Phase I shows that 75% of visitors to the Santa Cruz beach area visit the Boardwalk. Over half of these parties are visiting with their children and seeking “hands-on” activities. With only 17% of respondents from the Monterey Bay area, this audience indicated a relatively low awareness of the Sanctuary.

- ◆ Develop a Sanctuary education center at Seacliff State Beach to be used as a year-round facility to serve school groups and the community as a place where visitors gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Sanctuary’s ecosystems and human connection.

GOAL: Foster greater stewardship of the Sanctuary through education

CONCEPT: Develop a small (approx. 6,000 square foot) educational facility utilizing sustainable design and construction methods. Facility used primarily as an interpretive “classroom,” including exhibit elements, touch tank, interpretive trail, etc.

MARKET RATIONALE: 75% of Seacliff survey respondents indicated an awareness of the MBNMS; this is the highest level of awareness among the three survey locations. We conclude that this is because of the high number of local visitors, which the data supports. Seacliff respondents also indicated a strong preference for a Visitor Center to serve as an “educational resource.”

- ◆ Partner with the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History to develop the Fun Spot as, perhaps, an open-air interpretive site or satellite component of the Natural History Museum which will be built on the adjacent Depot site.

GOAL: Foster greater stewardship of the Sanctuary through education

CONCEPT: Work with Museum of Natural History to determine suitable role for MBNMS as partner.

MARKET RATIONALE: The potential visitation at this site is the same as described for the Beach Boardwalk. This site could offer a somewhat more educational experience to the visitor coming from the Boardwalk Visitor Center.

- ◆ Collaborate with the City of Monterey and private “experience providers” to utilize the Monterey Depot as an information and “departure center” where visitors can learn how and where to access and experience the Sanctuary.

GOAL: Facilitate and deepen the public’s engagement with the Sanctuary; get them out in it!

CONCEPT: Partner with the City to renovate the Depot and share space with a kayak rental company, whale watching company, diving outfitter or other compatible experience providers. This concept would not require additional square footage to be added to the existing building.

MARKET RATIONALE: Visitors to Monterey stay in the area longer than visitors to the other locations (who are mostly day visitors) and are not from the local area. Nearly half of all Monterey visitors also attend the Monterey Bay Aquarium and are introduced to the concept of ocean stewardship and marine habitats and wildlife. Given these three factors, the Sanctuary’s role in Monterey should be considerably different than the Aquarium’s role, but also engage the visitor with the ocean environment. In this case, the Aquarium would provide “virtual contact” and the Sanctuary would facilitate “actual contact.”

These four visitor-serving facilities would be established within a larger interpretive framework encompassing the entirety of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the other three California National Marine Sanctuaries.

Speaking practically, for the highest construction cost estimate of over \$6 million (“first costs” only), it is likely that the Sanctuary could establish the four functions within a comparable capital budget. Operating costs may be somewhat higher than one consolidated operation, but the impact created by providing multiple points of contact with the public would be maximized.

## **Recommended Next Steps**

The data and findings contained in this report will assist MBNMS and NOAA planners in the on-going effort to create visitor serving interpretive facilities in the Monterey Bay region. The consultants recommend that the MBNMS proceed through the following steps subsequent to the release of this report.

1. MBNMS and NOAA staff conduct internal review of report
  - a. Accept/reject findings.
  - b. Accept/reject/modify multiple facility concept.
  - c. Determine Visitor Center development strategy.
2. Develop identification and “branding” strategy for the Sanctuary
3. Interpretive planning
  - a. Prepare long-range interpretive plan for the MBNMS.
  - b. Develop detailed interpretive concept for the Visitor Center site(s) that responds to site-specific physical features, the market context and partnership opportunities.
4. Continue to explore partnership opportunities as appropriate with the cities of Monterey and Santa Cruz, the Seaside Company, California State Parks, Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History and other prospective partners.
5. Solidify partnerships and begin development of facility(ies).
  - a. Develop funding strategy
  - b. Commence architectural and exhibit design and development.
  - c. Commission necessary site-specific analysis and testing.

# *Management and Operations*

Estimates for the operation of a single, 12,000 square foot Visitor Center are based on the building, exhibits and programs determined by the consulting team and MBNMS staff and data collected from comparable facilities<sup>4</sup>. This operating forecast does not reflect the “multiple facility” strategy outlined in the previous section due to the consultants’ current scope of work. The estimates (in 2003 dollars) have been prepared for a “base year” of operations, which is assumed to be the third year after opening, when operations have stabilized. The following section provides a description of proposed staffing levels for the Center, a review of the assumptions and guidelines used in preparing the operating estimates, and revenue and expense projections.

For the purpose of the estimates, it is assumed that the center will operate in much the same way regardless of specific location. The consultants believe that as more information is discovered regarding each location, the operating plan will change in response to specific conditions accompanying each site. Therefore, this element of the report should be considered as a “work in progress,” especially if the concept of developing several smaller facilities (found on page 58) is implemented.

## **Management Structure**

The MBNMS Visitor Center will require knowledgeable and skilled management and support personnel to achieve its objective of creating and sustaining a dynamic, exciting, and popular educational attraction. The complexity of operating a federal facility, the diversity of the goals of the center and the requirement of working with partners will require a skillful and strongly

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<sup>4</sup> *Comparable facility information can be found in the Phase I report. Comparable facilities include National Park Service Visitor Centers and privately operated Centers in California, Oregon and Washington.*

committed management team. This estimate assumes that MBNMS education and outreach staff will operate the facility.

### **Staffing**

A full-time staff of seven is proposed to run the center if the full facility program is accommodated (12,000 square feet). Staff would consist of an Interpretive Director, Programs & Exhibits staff members and Marketing & Outreach professionals. In addition, a facility operations coordinator, a full-time/year-round gift shop manager and part time shop clerks will be required.

Part-time staff, volunteers, interns and contracted program instructors would be called upon to augment staff resources at the center and lead educational programs for children and adults. The personnel listed below represents the ideal and recommended staffing for the proposed Visitor Center. The Sanctuary may be able to achieve a certain level of staff efficiency by adding Visitor Center responsibilities to existing staff. This could either reduce the number of staff positions attributed to the Center, or reduce the salaries booked to the Center for some positions.

<b>Visitor Center Personnel</b>				
	FTE	Salary	Benefits	Total
Director of Interpretation & Education	1	\$65,000	25%	\$81,250
Marketing & Outreach Director	1	\$50,000	25%	\$62,500
Director of Programs & Exhibits	1	\$50,000	25%	\$62,500
Program & Exhibits Coordinator	1	\$45,000	25%	\$56,250
Administrative Assistant	1	\$35,000	25%	\$43,750
Facility Coordinator	1	\$36,000	25%	\$45,000
Shop Manager	1	\$36,000	25%	\$45,000
Hourly Shop Clerks (May - October)*	4	\$38,400	15%	\$44,160
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>\$355,400</b>		<b>\$440,410</b>

\*Shop Clerks @ \$10/hour

Figure 13: Personnel Costs

### **Operating Estimates**

Operating projections for a base stable year of the Visitor Center are summarized on the pages that follow. As is common with federally operated interpretive facilities and programs, admission to the Visitor Center will be free and there will be no charge for programs. The estimates are in 2003 dollars.

#### **Attendance**

A forecast annual attendance at the Center has been projected for each of the three possible locations in the Phase I report (Santa Cruz, Seacliff State Beach and Monterey). For the operating pro forma, the mid range visitation estimate has been used (see *Visitation Estimate* section of the Phase I report for detailed information). The mid-range figure assumes 10% of total area visitors would go



to the center. This percentage was derived by analyzing visitor data from comparable facilities, which indicated that, on average, visitor centers draw anywhere from 2% to 35% of an area's gross number of visitors. It is possible that the MBNMS Visitor Center would achieve a higher percentage depending on the level of marketing and the "wow factor" of exhibits and programs. It also assumes that nearly 75% of all visits would occur during the summer months.

### ***Membership and Fundraising***

Based on information gathered from model case studies, an estimate of 2,000 family memberships has been made; clearly this could be considerably higher if a concentrated program to develop memberships is undertaken (or lower if one is not). A base family membership fee of \$65 is assumed. Individual memberships would start at \$30 for students and could be \$300 or more for special donor categories. Members would receive special benefits such as reduced or free admission to special events or be invited to "members only" events and outings. Memberships and other donations would be collected by a non-profit support organization for the Visitor Center (perhaps the MBNMS Foundation). Other contributions are estimated to be \$150,000 per year.

### ***Gift Shop Sales***

Based on analysis of similar museums, gift shop sales are anticipated to average \$0.50 per visitor, with a 60% cost of goods sold. Sales could be greater depending on the level of effort and commitment of management to this enterprise. Because the Visitor Center will not be charging for admission or programs, gift shop sales is the largest source of earned revenue.

### ***Temporary Exhibits***

The Center may incorporate a space to accommodate touring and special exhibits. This estimate assumes that one exhibit will be produced annually by Center staff and could tour to other institutions. It is also projected that one additional touring exhibit would be hosted by the Center; some may be co-produced with other National Marine Sanctuaries throughout the country. AMS estimates that the MBNMS will spend approximately \$35,000 annually on these exhibits.

Exhibits			
<b>Temporary Exhibits</b>			
1	Curated Exhibits	\$15,000	\$15,000
1	Touring Exhibits	\$20,000	\$20,000
<b>Total Temporary Exhibit Expense</b>			<b>\$35,000</b>
<i>Note: exhibit expenses include publicity, catalogues, special events, fees, insurance, travel, etc.</i>			

Figure 14: Annual Exhibit Costs

**Public Programs**

As discussed in the Phase I report, the Visitor Center will periodically host special events for the general public. Examples would include special lectures, presentations, workshops and celebrations. The operating pro forma estimates that the MBNMS would present approximately 18 workshops and/or lecture-type events and four larger festival-type events. An average cost for workshops and lectures is estimated to be \$1,200 per event and each of the four larger events would cost approximately \$3,500.

Public Programs			
<b>Public Programs</b>			
<b>Expense</b>	<i>fees and direct costs for set-up crew, supplies and materials.</i>		
	<b># Programs</b>	<b>Avg. Cost per Prog.</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
<b>Public Workshops &amp; Lectures</b>	18	\$1,200	\$21,600
<b>Special Events</b>	4	\$3,500	\$14,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$35,600</b>

Figure 15: Public Program Costs

**School Programs**

Costs for school programs have been estimated for on-site programs. School groups would tour the Visitor Center and visit the coastal environment for hands-on learning. Costs include costs for instructors, instructional materials and promotion.

School Programs				
<b>On-Site School Programs Expenses</b>				
	<b># Prog. Days / Year</b>	<b>Instructors / program</b>	<b>Avg.\$ / Day / Instructor</b>	
<b>Instructors</b>	400	2	\$200	\$160,000
<b>Promotion</b>				\$20,000
<b>Supplies/Materials</b>	400		\$100	\$40,000
<b>Total Expense</b>				<b>\$220,000</b>

Figure 16: School Program Costs

### ***Outreach Programs***

Outreach programs include brochure publishing and distribution of materials to locations such as Senior Centers, public libraries, State Parks and other community venues. MBNMS staff currently offer outreach programs that will continue, but are not reflected in the Visitor Center's budget. While these costs might presently come from the MBNMS operating budget, we have included them here as an incremental increase above current production and distribution levels.

<b>Outreach Programs</b>			
<b>Misc. Literature Cost</b>			
	<b># of Units</b>	<b>Avg. \$ Per Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Brochures</b>	100,000	\$0.15	\$15,000
<b>Booklets</b>	25,000	\$1.00	\$25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			\$40,000

Figure 17: Outreach Program Costs

### ***Facility Rentals***

Successful museums, discovery centers, theaters and community arts centers in recent years have marketed their facilities to meeting planners and convention bureaus seeking reception and meeting spaces that offer a unique ambiance. Facility rentals are also a way in which the MBNMS can encourage the community to utilize the facility. AMS has estimated that the Visitor Center's public spaces and meeting room would be used approximately 56 times per year for these kinds of events, amounting to an estimated \$10,600 in annual rental revenue (gross). Rental rates range from \$150 to \$200 per use. It is likely that the MBNMS would cooperate with a non-profit partner to facilitate rental activities.

### ***Summary***

The estimated gross operating revenue (including memberships and fundraising) for the center during the base year ranges from \$325,000 to over \$400,000 depending the number of visitors to each location. Operating expenses are approximately \$1.4 million. Expenses fluctuate somewhat depending upon the number of estimated visitors and other site-specific factors such as square footage.

The "estimated lease" category has great potential to change depending upon the actual partnership arrangement made at the site(s). It is possible that no lease payment would be necessary if the facility is entirely funded by the Sanctuary and/or private contributions and no lease is required for use of the land (or existing space in the case of the Boardwalk).

The chart below shows the revenue/cost forecast for the third year of operations, considered the first stable year of operations. Subsequent years' budgets will grow with inflation and as the Center develops programs in response to market and funding opportunities. The first years of operation may entail a requirement for greater funding support as management experience is gained and attendance grows.

Summary Operating Statement				
Revenues	Fun Spot	Beach Boardwalk	Seacliff	Monterey
Memberships & Fundraising	280,000	280,000	280,000	280,000
Shop Sales (Gross @ \$.50 pp)	109,856	109,856	34,856	124,856
Facility Rentals	10,600	10,600	10,600	10,600
<b>TOTAL EARNED REVENUE</b>	<b>\$400,456</b>	<b>\$400,456</b>	<b>\$325,456</b>	<b>\$415,456</b>
Expenses				
Operations				
Personnel	440,410	440,410	440,410	440,410
Administrative Overhead	225,800	225,800	225,800	225,800
Utilities	42,000	22,750	42,000	35,000
Estimated Lease (\$2 per s.f.)*	288,000	312,000	288,000	240,000
<b>Subtotal, Operations</b>	<b>\$996,210</b>	<b>\$1,000,960</b>	<b>\$996,210</b>	<b>\$941,210</b>
Programs & Exhibits				
Temporary Exhibits	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
Public Programs	35,600	35,600	35,600	35,600
School Programs	220,000	220,000	220,000	220,000
Outreach Programs & Publishing	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Shop Cost of Goods	65,914	65,914	20,914	74,914
Exhibit Repair & Replacement	7,875	7,875	7,875	7,875
<b>Subtotal, Programs &amp; Exhibits</b>	<b>\$404,389</b>	<b>\$404,389</b>	<b>\$359,389</b>	<b>\$413,389</b>
SUBTOTAL OPERATING COSTS	<b>\$1,400,599</b>	<b>\$1,405,349</b>	<b>\$1,355,599</b>	<b>\$1,354,599</b>
3% Contingency	\$42,018	\$42,160	\$40,668	\$40,638
<b>TOTAL OPERATING COSTS</b>	<b>\$1,442,617</b>	<b>\$1,447,509</b>	<b>\$1,396,267</b>	<b>\$1,395,237</b>
<b>OPERATING NET or (LOSS)</b>	<b>(\$1,000,142)</b>	<b>(\$1,004,892)</b>	<b>(\$1,030,142)</b>	<b>(\$939,142)</b>

\*Lease for Beach Boardwalk site has been adjusted to include necessary administrative and support spaces

Figure 18: Summary Operating Statement

As the chart above indicates, there is very little fluctuation in overall operating costs between the four potential sites. The annual operating loss, or funding requirement, is estimated to be approximately one million dollars. The Sanctuary will need to develop strategies, both internally and with assistance from the community, to cover this amount. When one site has been determined, the consultants recommend that this pro forma be adjusted and a detailed operating plan developed based on a more thorough knowledge of assumptions.

# *Community & Economic Benefits*

This section analyzes the community and economic impacts of the proposed Visitor Center, including operating expenditures on wages, services and goods and employment generated. The basis for the analysis combines data from the operating estimate and visitor research.

## **Community Benefits**

There are numerous positive benefits for communities where artistic, cultural and interpretive facilities exist. Among these are:

- ◆ A Visitor Center will increase local connections to the ocean.
- ◆ Increased educational opportunities
  - An interpretive facility typically provides a variety of educational programs for visitors, schools, youth groups and adult groups. Communities benefit when the residents are given special opportunities to continue their education and when children are provided with unique experiences that augment State curriculum standards.
- ◆ Employment opportunities
  - The MBNMS Visitor Center will employ members of the community on both a full-time and part-time basis. The positions created as a result of the center range from contracted instructors to full-time administrators.
- ◆ Volunteer opportunities
  - Often cultural and educational facilities rely on the generosity of volunteers to accomplish their missions. Volunteers can provide tours, complete administrative tasks and help monitor the facility. This is clearly a benefit to the facility's operating budget, but a volunteer program also benefits the community by providing a worthwhile endeavor for retired citizens, young people and families.
- ◆ Partner in community projects

- When communities organize special celebrations, events, meetings and other projects, it is often the non-profit and public agencies that forge partnerships to accomplish the project. The addition of the MBNMS Visitor Center would add to the resources available for these projects.

Negative impacts resulting from the creation of an MBNMS Visitor Center will be heavily dependent on which location is selected. The negative impacts would mostly be associated with increases in automobile and foot traffic, parking and noise or visual pollution. It should be noted that each of the sites under consideration is already negatively impacted in these ways as they are all popular destinations for locals and visitors. The addition of the MBNMS Visitor Center will not add substantially to the number of visitors already attending the locations under consideration. As earlier sections of this report indicate, some of the possibilities offer better parking and vehicular circulation paths than others. For example, the number of school groups forecast to attend weekday programs would possibly impact the primarily residential Seacliff site more than the urban sites in Santa Cruz and Monterey. However, by identifying these issues at this early stage of planning numerous solutions to challenges such as this can be found.

## **Economic Impact**

Economic impact is a measure of the total direct and indirect economic benefits realized in a geographic region as a result of expenditures. Economic benefits are normally considered to be the increases in wealth of individuals or businesses. Considering the proposed MBNMS Visitor Center project, the economic beneficiaries of the project will include employees of the center, direct suppliers of goods and services, as well as businesses and individuals that profit from the consequent expenditures of employees, suppliers and patrons.

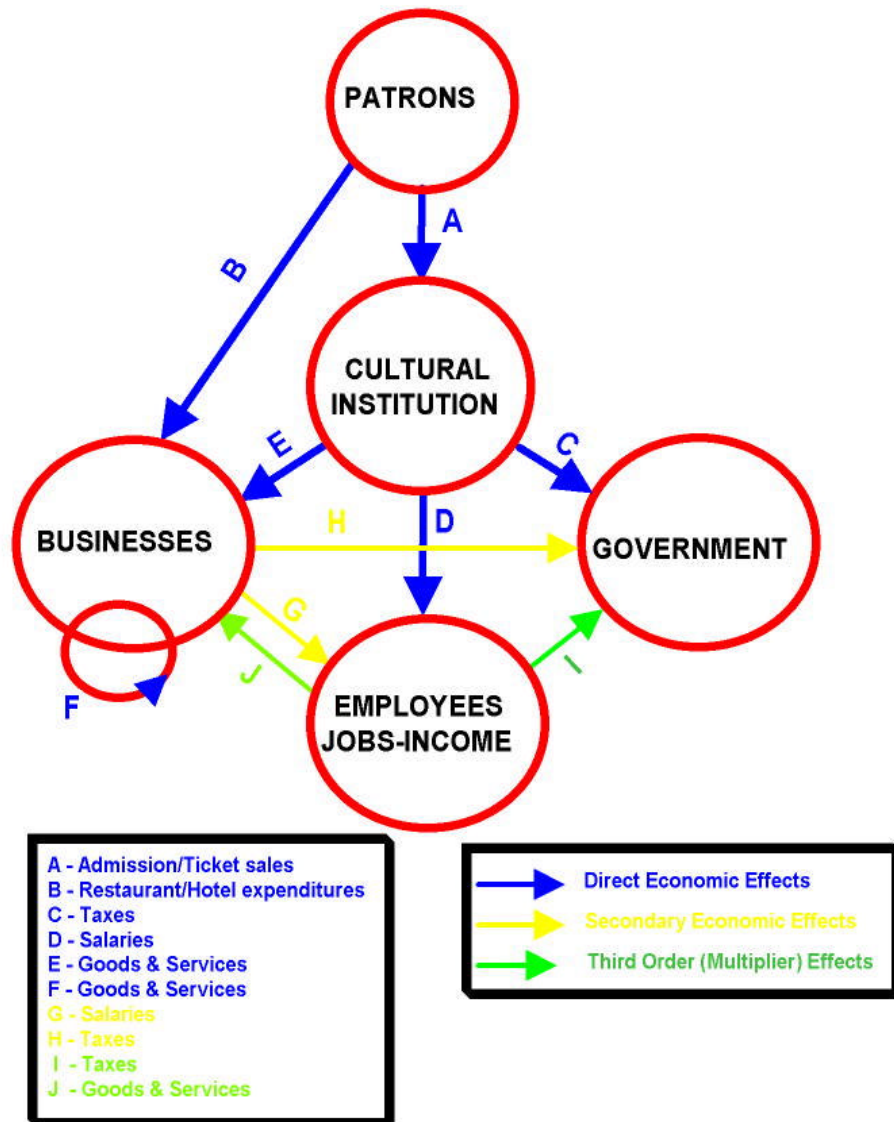
Direct and indirect benefits can be viewed as two wholly separate components of the total economic impact. The direct impact results from expenditures on salaries, goods, and services, including the secondary income generated by these expenditures (measured by a multiplier process). The indirect benefits result from any related or ancillary spending, which is stimulated by the presence of the facilities in the community. Figure 19 graphically depicts these economic impacts.

The multiplier effect referred to above results from the re-spending of money that employees, businesses, and others receive in payments of earnings. This secondary spending is a further addition to the income of local businesses. Subsequent re-spending continues to increase the impact. Of course, since only a portion of these funds is spent locally, the subsequent re-spending effect gets smaller by the amount spent outside the community. The effect eventually diminishes entirely, but before that happens the total economic effect will be several times the original expenditure. The multiplier, then, is the ratio of the total increase in local incomes to the initial expenditure, and it represents the factor by which the initial spending multiplies in its total impact on the income of the community. For this analysis, AMS has drawn on studies conducted for the

National Endowment for the Arts and in many communities throughout the U.S., applying principles and multiplier effects similar to those used in such studies.

The indirect component of the economic impact arises from the fact that when people attend an attraction, they frequently incur some ancillary concurrent expenditures; perhaps a meal, gasoline, parking or other purchases. Visitors from out of town may stay a night, or at least buy a souvenir for the folks back home. Concurrent expenditures in smaller cities would be somewhat smaller since the costs of services are less. Concurrent spending stimulates secondary respending in the same way as direct spending does. It should be noted that in this case, because the MBNMS Visitor Center will be located in an area where visitors currently congregate, it is unclear how much new spending will occur by visitors. It is not projected that the center will attract a substantial number of new visitors to the area. However, the center will potentially encourage visitors to stay longer and return more frequently.

Figure 19: Economic Impact of a Cultural Institution





The following discussion of the economic impact is necessarily short and is a simplification of an extremely complex subject. The application of the analysis to the MBNMS Visitor Center project is based on preliminary operating estimates and on extensive research into comparable projects by some of the nation's leading economists. The analysis is divided into components of the impact according to the above description. Expenditures used for this impact assessment are from the operating estimates for a base year of operation. Each category will be examined and then an estimate of the overall impact made.

### ***Direct Expenditures***

#### ***Salaries***

Salary payments will be made to the full-time and part-time staff of the Visitor Center, who, it is presumed, will reside in the Monterey Bay area. This represents an immediate economic impact equal to the value of the salaries, which will amount to about \$355,000 annually for regular staff members plus an additional \$160,000 annually for education program instructors. The total payments made in salaries annually will amount to \$515,000.

#### ***Purchases***

These expenditures may be split into those purchases made from local suppliers and those from non-local suppliers. Purchases from local suppliers will result in direct increases in the income of local businesses; purchases from non-local suppliers will have a lesser effect but, nevertheless, the benefit is not zero since many of the suppliers will incur local costs. A significant proportion of the revenue to both local and non-local suppliers will be spent in the local economy. Local purchases for facility operations, programs and administration are estimated to be about \$172,000 annually. Non-local purchases will similarly be around \$175,000 per year.

#### ***Estimated Annual Direct Economic Impact***

Based on local research and on comparative studies in other U.S. cities, the following estimates are made:

<b><u>Component</u></b>	<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>	<b><u>Multiplier</u></b>	<b><u>Impact</u></b>
Salaries	\$515,000	2.0	\$1,030,000
Local Purchases	\$172,000	1.75	\$301,000
Non-Local Purchases	\$175,000	0.25	\$43,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$939,000</b>		<b>\$1,374,750</b>

Figure 20: Direct Impacts

***Construction Cost Impact***

If a new Visitor Center is developed, a one-time economic impact of the construction should also be considered. Typically, a multiplier of 2.3 times the construction budget is used. As the chart below indicates, the economic impact of construction ranges from approximately \$6.5 million to over \$14 million depending on the scope and scale of the project.

<u>Site</u>	<u>Cost Estimate</u>	<u>Multiplier</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Fun Spot	\$5,700,000	2.3	\$13,110,000
Boardwalk	\$2,800,000	2.3	\$6,440,000
Seacliff	\$5,755,125	2.3	\$13,236,788
Monterey	\$6,090,000	2.3	\$14,007,000

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Figure 21: Construction Cost Impact

***Indirect Expenditures***

The impact from indirect expenditures results from attendance to the facility. Given the size and scope of the proposed Visitor Center, it is unlikely that it will create significant new visitation to the selected site. However, it will potentially extend the number of hours or days that a visitor may choose to stay in the area, which would induce additional spending. The Visitor Center will also generate a small percentage of new visitors who would add new money to the local economy.

The chart below calculates ancillary spending of all Visitor Center visitors. These numbers do not necessarily represent new spending in the economy. The exact economic impact generated by the Visitor Center can be accurately measured only after operations have commenced and visitor data has been collected.

Typically, impact from attendance is split into local and non-local components. Expenditures by, and the multiplier from non-local attendance, are somewhat higher than for local patrons.

The preliminary mid-range estimates for annual public attendance (does not include estimates for school groups) is comprised of the following:

Santa Cruz .....	350,000
Seacliff .....	100,000
Monterey .....	400,000

The spending pattern of each type of patron will be markedly different depending on the availability of amenities and numerous other factors. Based on economic impact research of cultural institutions in the United States, AMS estimates that for the local resident an average estimate of \$6.00 per patron is used; for the non-local attendee an average estimate of \$12.00 per patron has been assumed. For the purpose of this analysis, a figure of 85 percent non-local patrons has been

applied to the Santa Cruz and Monterey locations and a figure of 70 percent non-local has been applied to the Seacliff site.

<u>Component</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Spending</u>	<u>Multiplier</u>	<u>Impact</u>
Santa Cruz Local	52,500	\$6.00	.75	\$236,250
SC Non-Local	297,500	\$12.00	1.75	\$6,247,500
Seacliff Local	30,000	\$6.00	.75	\$135,000
Seacliff Non-Local	70,000	\$12.00	1.75	\$1,470,000
Monterey Local	60,000	\$6.00	.75	\$270,000
Monterey Non-Local	340,000	\$12.00	1.75	\$7,140,000

Figure 22: Indirect Impacts

The Total potential economic benefit of an MBNMS Visitor Center at the Santa Cruz sites (including both direct and indirect impacts) is estimated to be nearly \$8 million annually plus the direct impact of construction activity. For Seacliff, the total economic impact would be nearly \$3 million annually and for Monterey the impact would be close to \$9 million annually plus one-time construction impacts.

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# *Appendix II: Glossary of Terms*

## **GLOSSARY OF SELECT TERMS**

*Taken from Glossary of Geology (fourth edition), by Julia A. Jackson (editor), published by American Geological Institute, Alexandria, Virginia, 1997*

- ❑ Cenozoic Era - 65 million years ago to present.
- ❑ Effective stress - the average normal force per unit area transmitted directly from particle to particle of a soil or rock mass.
- ❑ Holocene Epoch - 11,500 years ago to present.
- ❑ Lateral spreading - lateral movements in a fractured mass of rock or soil, which result from liquefaction or plastic flow of subjacent materials.
- ❑ Liquefaction - the transformation of loosely packed sediment into a fluid mass as a result of increased pore pressure and reduced effective stress.
- ❑ Miocene Epoch - 23 million to 5.3 million years ago.
- ❑ Paleocene Epoch - 65 million to 55 million years ago.
- ❑ Pleistocene Epoch - 1.6 million to 11,500 years ago.
- ❑ Pore Pressure - the stress transmitted by the fluid that fills the voids between particles of soil or rock mass.
- ❑ Quaternary Period - 1.6 million years ago to present.
- ❑ Tsunami - a gravitational sea wave produced by an large-scale, short-duration disturbance of the ocean floor, principally by a shallow submarine earthquake, but also by submarine earth movement, subsidence, or volcanic eruption.